

INVESTIGATIVE TEAM

Governor's Special Investigators

Robert E. Wilson
Michael J. Bowers
Richard L. Hyde

Balch and Bingham, LLP

James L. Hollis
Jeremy W. Gregory
E. Righton Johnson

Kara M. Engelberger, Paralegal
Deborah Daley, Legal Assistant
Susan G. Hughes, Legal Assistant
Barbara Watson, Legal Assistant
Lydia Rooks, Legal Assistant
Elizabeth A. Jackson, Project Asst.

Wilson, Morton and Downs, LLC

Keri P. Ware
Roslyn S. Mowatt

Linda Weaver, Paralegal
Debbie Morelli, Paralegal
Tracey Duren, Legal Assistant
Cheryl Hicks, Legal Assistant

Georgia Bureau of Investigation

Director Vernon M. Keenan
Inspector John Heinen
Special Agent Heather Strickland (Case Agent)

Kelly Aldrich
Renea Anderson
Elizabeth Bigham
Rocky Bigham
Amy Braswell
Leigh Brooks
Michael Brooks
Tonya Cales
Ryan Carmichael
Derek Coffey
Jerri Lynn Coody
Karen Crowe

Dan Kirk, Assistant Director
Monica Ling
Gregory Linton
Chad Lott
Kendra Lynn
ASAC Jesse Maddox
Lindsay Marchant
Christopher McKeown
Megan Miller
Rhiannon Morgan
Carlos Murray
David Norman

Agie George
Lindsey Giddens
Earl Glover
Wendell Goodman
Brian Hargrove
James Harris
Mary Holder
Wesley Horne
Eugene Howard
Terry Howard
Cecil Hutchins
Cayce Ingalls
Anita Ivy
Marko Jones
Deanna Jury
Lawrence Kelly
Klay Kilcrease

SAC Denise Norman
Richard Otwell
Trebor Randle
Latoria Reynolds
Janet N. Rhodes
Evelyn Rodgers
Deborah Rollins
Amanda Rowlen
Rebecca Shaw
Jamie Skelton
Kristina Smalley
Paul Smith
Jonathan Spurlock
Sara Thomas
Lisa Vorrasi
Cynthia Wahl
Benny Williams

Georgia Information Sharing and Analysis Center

Meredith Bailey
Emily Butler
Yvonne Darrell
Heather Davis
Kevin Garrett
Yalanda Greene
Laurie Lane
ASAC Cynthia Ledford
Stephanie Lockridge
Jessica Price
Mark Reinking
Terri St. Romain
Jan Roulain, Department of Corrections
Deanna Scott
Tammy Starckey
Wendi Walker
Keesha Walker

Office of State Inspector General

Elizabeth Pequeño Archer, Esq.
Deron R. Hicks, Esq.
William L. Donaldson, III, CPA, CFE
Deborah Wallace, CIG

District Attorney, Atlanta Judicial Circuit

Hon. Paul Howard
Judge Eleanor L. Ross (Formerly Executive Assistant District Attorney)

Solicitor-General, DeKalb County

Hon. Sherry Boston
Investigator Steve Barresi

Georgia State Patrol

Col. Bill Hitchens
Lt. Col. Mark McDonough
Major Russell Powell
Lt. Mark Lambert
Sgt. Robert Moody
Trooper Christopher Hinkle
Trooper K. Reeder
Trooper Chris Stallings
Trooper Larry Miller

Report Limitations

This report is an overview of the evidence and our findings. It is not intended to include every detail or fact developed during this investigation. Nor does it include every relevant document. All notes, documents, transcripts and interview summaries related to this investigation will be available to you, and the appropriate authorities for whatever action, if any, is appropriate.

Special Thanks

The investigators wish to express their gratitude to Governors Perdue and Deal, and their staffs, for their support of our work. We also wish to extend our appreciation to Ms. Kathleen Mathers, Director of the Governor's Office of Student Achievement, for her indispensable assistance throughout this investigation.

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**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
SPECIAL INVESTIGATORS**



June 30, 2011

HAND DELIVERED

Governor Nathan Deal
State Capitol
Atlanta, GA 30335


Dear Governor Deal:


In January of this year, you continued our appointment as your special investigators to probe allegations of test tampering and related matters in the Atlanta Public School System (APS).

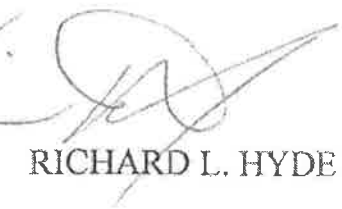
We have determined that cheating occurred throughout that school district. Our investigation found organized and systemic wrongdoing in APS well before the administration of the 2009 CRCT.

Our investigative report follows. The entire file is available to the appropriate authorities, as you direct. Please let us know if we may be of further service.

Very truly yours,


MICHAEL J. BOWERS


ROBERT E. WILSON


RICHARD L. HYDE

Map of Schools

Legend

School Locations

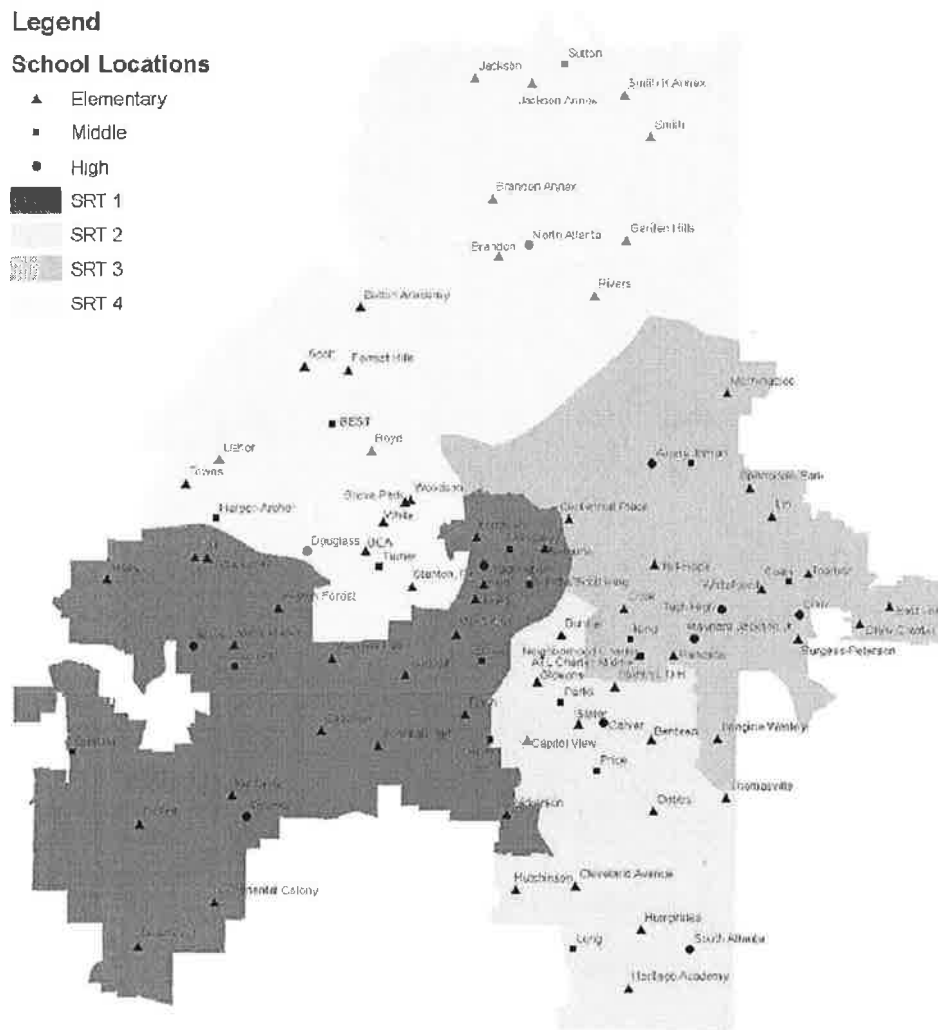
- ▲ Elementary
- Middle
- High

SRT 1

SRT 2

SRT 3

SRT 4



Atlanta Public Schools Facility Locations 2009-2010

OVERVIEW

Thousands of school children were harmed by widespread cheating in the Atlanta Public School System (APS). In 30 schools, educators confessed to cheating. We found cheating on the 2009 Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) in 44 of the 56 schools (78.6%) we examined, and uncovered organized and systemic misconduct within the district as far back as 2001. Superintendent Beverly Hall and her senior staff knew, or should have known, that cheating and other offenses were occurring. Many of the accolades, and much of the praise, received by APS over the last decade were ill-gotten.

We identified 178 educators as being involved in cheating. Of these, 82 confessed. Thirty-eight of the 178 were principals, from two-thirds of the schools we examined. The 2009 erasure analysis suggests that there were far more educators involved in cheating, and other improper conduct, than we were able to establish sufficiently to identify by name in this report.

A culture of fear and a conspiracy of silence infected this school system, and kept many teachers from speaking freely about misconduct. From the onset of this investigation, we were confronted by a pattern of interference by top APS leadership in our attempt to gather evidence. These actions delayed the completion of this inquiry and hindered the truth-seeking process.

The APS General Counsel told us that one of her main duties was to provide Superintendent Hall with “deniability.” Her aim was to insulate Dr. Hall from the burden of responsibility for making difficult decisions. This veil of deniability at the school level was aptly illustrated by long-time Gideons Elementary principal Armstead Salters, who told his teachers: “If anyone asks you anything about this, just tell them you don’t know . . . just stick to the story and it will go away.”

There was a failure of leadership throughout APS with regard to the ethical administration of the 2009 CRCT. There are two main reasons for this failure. Dr. Hall’s insular style and her isolation from the rank-and-file was a major factor. In addition, Dr. Hall and her top managers refused to accept responsibility for anything other than success. As Dr. Hall’s Chief of Staff, Sharron Pitts, explained to us, “nobody ever wants to take responsibility for anything” in APS.

Deputy Superintendent Kathy Augustine oversaw daily classroom instruction, and operated as the *de facto* second-in-command. She told us that she should not be held responsible for cheating that took place in APS classrooms under her authority.

While this may be an appropriate defense to criminal charges, it is an absurd leadership concept. Dr. Hall and her senior cabinet accepted accolades when those below them performed well, but they wanted none of the burdens of failure.

The first person to report cheating to us provided the same information months earlier to his superiors, only to have the wrongdoers quickly exonerated while he was reprimanded. This educator made these allegations known to the proper officials inside of APS. However, the district improperly handled this complaint in violation of its own policies. That inquiry was brought to a swift, and predictable, conclusion. The guilty went free; the whistle-blower was punished. This was not an isolated occurrence and was illustrative of the culture of fear and intimidation which promoted a code of silence.

The Office of Internal Resolution (OIR) was responsible for internal investigations, but lacked independence and gave those who wanted to report improper activity little confidence that complaints would be objectively, fairly and competently investigated.

As early as 2006, APS officials improperly manipulated and hid information relating to CRCT administration, and illegally altered documents related to that test. The school district often failed to comply with Georgia's open records laws, withheld public information and gave false data to an agency of this state.

Dr. Hall stated publicly, and several times, that she would "fully cooperate" with our efforts. However, the district was slow in producing documents and claimed legal exemptions where none existed.

All of this was done to keep from public view, and this inquiry, information which might raise doubts about the validity of the 2009 CRCT scores, and other indicators of success in the classroom.

Blue Ribbon Commission (BRC) expert, Dr. John Fremer, wrote an op-ed piece for *The Atlanta Journal - Constitution* (AJC) which said: "...[w]holesale organized cheating in some Atlanta Public Schools occurred and must be addressed." (Ex. 1). Experts who assisted us expressed similar sentiments in saying that cheating is the only plausible explanation for the abnormally high standard deviations shown in the erasure analysis.

One of the first tasks we undertook was to test the validity of the Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) erasure analysis. This was done with the assistance of our expert during a visit to the test facility of CTB McGraw-Hill. The erasure analysis is, without question, accurate and reliable.

The statistics are astounding. For example, of the approximately 1,800 non-APS elementary and middle schools in Georgia where the 2009 CRCT was given, 54 schools were flagged with more than 20% of their classes being greater than three standard deviations outside the state norm on wrong-to-right erasures. Yet in the 90 elementary and middle schools in the APS system where the 2009 CRCT was given, 52 schools were flagged with more than 20% of their classes being greater than three standard deviations outside the norm. Incredibly, almost half of

the schools flagged for being greater than three standard deviations outside of the norm in our state were from the Atlanta Public School System.

THE CRCT

The CRCT is a multiple choice examination given annually to all public school students in Georgia. There are five subject areas that are tested: reading; English/language arts; math; social studies and science. Students are scored as “meets standards,” “exceeds standards” or “does not meet standards.” The CRCT is considered an important test because its results help determine whether a school makes “Annual Yearly Progress” (AYP) as required by the federal No Child Left Behind Act. Every elementary and middle school within a school district must administer the CRCT at the same time and in the same manner, during a nine-day window. During the first five days, a different subject area is tested each day. The last four days of the window are used for make-up testing.

Georgia law requires that the test be administered under tightly-controlled conditions. The test materials are delivered to the individual schools several days before the test begins. Each school designates a certified educator to be responsible for test administration. In APS, this person is known as the testing coordinator, who must ensure that the test is administered according to the test protocols. But the principal bears ultimate responsibility for ensuring how the test is administered.

Teachers receive training on test administration using procedures that specifically set forth how the test must be given. Any deviation from the test protocols is prohibited.

In first and second grade, teachers read the test questions aloud and students answer questions in the test booklet by marking the correct answer. (Ex. 2). Teachers must read each question only twice, with no voice inflection that could suggest the answer. Third through eighth graders read the test questions for themselves and answer questions on a separate Scantron® sheet by filling in the appropriate bubble by pencil. (Ex. 3). Each test section is timed and contains between forty and sixty questions. Only special education students with specified accommodations may have variances in the test administration.

INTERVIEWS AND DOCUMENT REVIEW

On August 26, 2010, Governor Sonny Perdue appointed us as his Special Investigators to investigate alleged test tampering, and related matters, in the Atlanta Public School System. (Ex. 4). This order was augmented by oral directives that we were to:

- Find the truth with regard to cheating, if any, on the 2009 CRCT within APS;
- Assist state regulators in sanctioning educators who participated in cheating;
- Submit information to prosecuting authorities regarding criminal conduct, if discovered.

Governor Perdue emphasized that our mandate was to find the truth. He also stressed that teachers who were honest in their testimony should not be criminally prosecuted. You restated these directives to us upon assuming office. (Ex. 5).

In order to gain an understanding of the overall structure of APS, how the testing process works, the relevant players, and what documents would be needed, we first conducted benchmark interviews of top officials in the district, including Dr. Hall, Dr. Augustine, Dr. Cari Ryan, and Dr. Alexis Kirijan. Most of these officials were interviewed again toward the end of this investigation.

We interviewed the teachers and administrators at each of the flagged schools, as well as current and former executive directors of each school reform team (SRT). The SRT executive directors function as assistant superintendents, assigned to one of four geographic areas of elementary and middle schools for the district. They oversee principals at the schools within their SRT and report directly to Dr. Kathy Augustine.

In addition to interviews of district personnel, we also spoke with scores of individuals from outside the system, who participated in the BRC investigation or served as consultants. We conducted over 2,100 interviews and reviewed in excess of 800,000 documents.

2009 ERASURE ANALYSIS

In February 2010, the Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) produced an erasure analysis performed by CTB McGraw-Hill on the spring 2009 CRCT. The results of this analysis raised the possibility of testing irregularities. The GOSA erasure analysis, which was performed on the test answer documents for every elementary and middle school student in the State of Georgia, compared the number of wrong-to-right (WTR) erasures by grade, test subject and class to the average number of WTR erasures state-wide for the corresponding grade and test subject. The results of the erasure analysis showed that in 35 Georgia school districts, including APS, a significant number of classes had WTR erasures that were dramatically and disconcertingly higher than the state average.

Specifically, CTB McGraw-Hill determined that if a class had WTR erasures more than three standard deviations above the expected norm (i.e., the state average), it was almost statistically impossible for such a high number of WTR erasures to have occurred without some external force operating to cause it. For example, at three standard deviations there is only a one in 370 chance that the high erasures occurred by coincidence and at five standard deviations there is only a one in 1.7 million chance. By seven standard deviations, it is virtually impossible—only a one in 390 billion chance—that such a high number of WTR erasures occurred randomly.

STANDARD DEVIATIONS CHART

Standard Deviations	Chance of Occurring Randomly
3	1 / 370
4	1 / 15,788
5	1 / 1,774,278
6	1 / 560,800,000
7	1 / 390,600,000,000

In other words, some external force operated to cause the WTR erasures. Although a WTR erasure analysis does not indicate that the external force was cheating, it does suggest that something other than normal student erasing occurred.

Thirty-five Georgia districts had schools with more than five percent of the classes flagged for standard deviations higher than three. (Ex. 6). The GOSA study grouped schools into four categories based on the percentage of flagged classrooms: “clear of concern”; “minimal concern”; “moderate concern”; and “severe concern.” Eighty-percent of Georgia’s elementary and middle schools fell into the “clear of concern” category, 10% fell into “minimal concern,” 6% fell into “moderate concern,” and 4% fell into the “severe concern” category.

APS ERASURE ANALYSIS

The percentage of flagged classes in APS far exceeded any other district in Georgia. Of the middle and elementary schools 51% fell into the “severe concern” category. Of the “moderate concern,” were 18%, and 8% were of “minimal concern.” (Ex. 7). APS accounts for over half of the “severe” category schools in the state. Parks Middle School, with 89.5% of its classes flagged, led the state in percentage of classes flagged for WTR erasures, with Gideons Elementary and Peyton Forest Elementary not far behind at 88.4% and 86.1%, respectively.

The erasure analysis only flagged classes that departed from the norm by three or more standard deviations. But many classes in APS had standard deviations ranging from the 20’s to the 50’s. (Ex. 8). One classroom was at 53. It is virtually impossible for so many WTR erasures to occur without human intervention.

Amazingly, many APS teachers had high WTR erasures in all three subject areas—English/language arts, reading and math. Not only did numerous teachers do something that was virtually impossible one time, but did it three times in a row. Even more amazing, several teachers in the same school did this multiple times.

Dr. Gregory Cizek, our expert, analogized the chances of this occurring to the Georgia Dome being filled to capacity, with every person in the Dome being

seven feet tall. Dr. John Fremer of Caveon Test Security, hired by the BRC to conduct its own statistical analysis, described this in terms of flipping two coins three times in a row, and the coins land on their edge, perfectly balanced, one on top of the other, all three times.

VERIFICATION OF THE ERASURE ANALYSIS

We verified that the results of the erasure analysis were accurate and consistent. This study served as a guide to identify where cheating may have occurred, and it established the foundation for this investigation. We took the following steps to ensure its validity:

- Retained an expert to review the GOSA erasure analysis;
- Inspected the CTB McGraw-Hill facility and interviewed several members of the staff who were involved in grading the CRCT and conducting the erasure analysis;
- Observed the answer document scanning process;
- Compared the results of the erasure analysis to the results of a reanalysis of selected and random test documents;
- Manually reviewed thousands of answer sheets and compared them to the results of the original erasure analysis; and,
- Interviewed experts in the educational testing and statistics field.

Based on these efforts, we concluded that the GOSA erasure analysis is accurate, reproducible, and reliable.

We retained Gregory J. Cizek, Ph.D., of the University of North Carolina, who is one of the foremost experts on educational testing and statistics in the nation. Dr. Cizek is a Professor of Educational Measurement and Evaluation in the School of Education at UNC. He currently serves as the President of the National Council on Measurement in Education. (Ex. 9). After Cizek reviewed the erasure analysis, he accompanied us to the CTB McGraw-Hill facility. We toured the CTB McGraw-Hill plant, observed the answer documents being re-scanned and interviewed CTB McGraw-Hill's statistician and other personnel familiar with the scanning process.

CTB McGraw-Hill's high-optical scanner read the students' test documents and recorded answers and erasures for each section. A computer used special software to determine when an answer was changed from wrong-to-right (WTR), right-to-wrong (RTW), or wrong-to-wrong (WTW). This data reflected the total number of erasures and the total number of WTR changes for each student in each subject area in Georgia.

Next, CTB McGraw-Hill employed a statistical test to flag excessive numbers of WTR erasures in a class. (Ex. 10). The average number of WTR erasures statewide in a given grade and subject were compared to the number of WTR erasures in a specific class within the APS district. The proximity of erasures to the expected norm is expressed in terms of standard deviations. CTB

McGraw-Hill flagged classes that were three or more standard deviations above the state average.

GOSA used a conservative criterion of three standard deviations. This was done to insure that only the most severe and questionable erasures were identified.

We interviewed company officials and manually reviewed answer documents, counted erasures, and compared our count with the computer's analysis. This manual count of erasures revealed more changes than the computer scanning process. The computer is not as stringent as the human eye. The difference is not because the scanner missed erasures, but because it is calibrated to give the benefit of the doubt to a certain level before it considers a lighter mark.

To confirm the study results, we asked that CTB McGraw-Hill re-scan both random and selected tests. The results of the re-scanned answer documents were consistent with the results of the original erasure analysis.

We interviewed the two individuals from Caveon Test Security who used the GOSA erasure data and conducted their own analysis on behalf of the BRC. Neither disputed the results of the GOSA study. The top 12 schools flagged under their "Caveon Index" were identical to the highest flagged schools under the GOSA analysis.

USE OF THE ERASURE ANALYSIS IN THIS INVESTIGATION

The erasure data helped us prioritize interviews of educators at the schools to allow us to efficiently focus our efforts. We also used this information when we questioned teachers and administrators, since they had not been provided with this data by anyone in the district.

We compared the student scores with other evidence to better understand what occurred in classrooms. The student data listed every student in APS and set forth how many total erasures, versus how many WTR erasures, appeared on that student's answer document. This information provided an additional perspective for analyzing erasures.

When student-level data revealed a large number of students within a single class with high erasures that changed from wrong to right 70%-100% of the time, such information raised an additional suspicion that someone other than the students could be changing answers.

SCHOOL SUMMARIES

Investigative summaries of the 56 schools we examined follow this section. We found that 178 teachers and principals were involved in cheating in 44 schools. Sixty-eight percent of the principals of the 56 schools were responsible for cheating, and six of those refused to answer all questions we asked them, including about their involvement in cheating. These six pled the Fifth Amendment, which

for civil law purposes, such as a Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC) proceeding, is an implied admission.

An investigative compilation shows a breakdown of those found cheating by each school.

INVESTIGATIVE COMPILATION			
School	Confessions	Other	Total
Parks Middle	7	6 (Incl. Prin.).	13
Venetian Hills Elementary	6	2 (Incl. Prin.).	8
Gideons Elementary	12 (Incl. Prin.).	0	12
Kennedy Middle	1	3 (Incl. Prin.).	4
FL Stanton Elementary	1	2 (Incl. Prin.).	3
Perkerson Elementary	0	3 (Incl. Prin.).	3
Connally Elementary	1	1 (Incl. Prin.).	2
Usher Elementary	3	2 (Incl. Prin.).	5
Peyton Forest Elementary	0	10 (Incl. Prin.).	10
East Lake Elementary	0	2 (Incl. Prin.).	2
Cook Elementary	2	4 (Incl. Prin.).	6
Woodson Elementary	2	3 (Incl. Prin.).	5
Scott Elementary	0	3 (Incl. Prin.).	3
Deerwood Academy	1	3 (Incl. Prin.).	4
Humphries Elementary	2	3 (Incl. Prin.).	5
Dunbar Elementary	1	7 (Incl. Prin.).	8
DH Stanton Elementary	0	2 (Incl. Prin.).	2
Finch Elementary	3	6 (Incl. Prin.).	9
Coan Middle	1	2 (Incl. Prin.).	3
Dobbs Elementary	4	2 (Incl. Prin.).	6
Toomer Elementary	3 (Incl. Prin.).	1	4
Benteen Elementary	0	3 (Incl. Prin.).	3
Beecher Hills Elementary	3	1 (Incl. Prin.).	4
Fain Elementary	2	2 (Incl. Prin.).	4
Slater Elementary	2	3 (Incl. Prin.).	5
Thomasville Heights Elementary	2	2 (Incl. Prin.).	4
Fickett Elementary	2	2 (Incl. Prin.).	4
Hutchinson Elementary	1	1 (Incl. Prin.).	2
Capitol View Elementary	0	1 (Incl. Prin.).	1
Towns Elementary	0	1 (Incl. Prin.).	1
Blalock Elementary	0	1 (Incl. Prin.).	1
Whitefoord Elementary	0	1 (Incl. Prin.).	1
Boyd Elementary	0	1 (Incl. Prin.).	1
West Manor Elementary	0	1 (Incl. Prin.).	1
Turner Middle	0	1 (Incl. Prin.).	1
White Elementary	0	1 (Incl. Prin.).	1
Harper Archer Middle	0	0	0
MA Jones Elementary	6	1	7
Parkside Elementary	3	0	3
Bethune Elementary	2	1 (Incl. Prin.).	3
Miles Elementary	2	1	3
Grove Park Elementary	2	0	2
Jackson Elementary	2	0	2
Cleveland Elementary	1	0	1
Crim Open Campus	0	0	0
Benjamin Carson Middle	0	0	0
CW Hill Elementary	0	0	0
Adamsville Elementary	0	0	0
Cascade Elementary	0	0	0
Heritage Elementary	0	0	0
University Community Academy	2	4 (Incl. Prin.).	6
Williams Elementary	0	0	0
Herndon Elementary	0	0	0
Bolton Elementary	0	0	0
Morningside Elementary	0	0	0
Morris Brandon Elementary	0	0	0
TOTAL	82	96	178

For each school we have prepared analyses of relevant witness interviews, statistical data and other materials. Listed below is some of the misconduct found in the school summaries. What is revealed is outrageous:

- Teachers and administrators erased students' incorrect answers after the test was given and filled in the correct answers;
- The changing of answers by teachers and administrators was, in some cases, so sophisticated that plastic transparency answer sheets were created to make changing the test answer sheets easier;
- Changing of answers was often done at weekend gatherings, and in at least one instance at a teacher's home in Douglas County, Georgia;
- A principal forced a teacher with low CRCT scores to crawl under a table at a faculty meeting;
- Teachers arranged classroom seating for tests so that lower performing children could cheat off the higher scoring students;
- Children were denied special educational assistance because their falsely-reported CRCT scores were too high;
- Students requested that they be assigned to a certain teacher because that educator was said to cheat;
- First and second grade teachers used voice inflection while reading the test to identify the answer;
- Teachers pointed to the correct answer while standing at students' desks;
- Teachers gave the answers aloud to students;
- Some teachers allowed students to change the previous day's incorrect responses after giving them correct answers;
- Teachers looked ahead to discuss the next day's questions;

- In one classroom a student sat under his desk and refused to take the test. This child passed.

Following the school summaries is a comparison between the 2009 and 2010 erasure analyses. There was a dramatic drop in the percentage of flagged classrooms between these years. This was only after media attention and the state sent representatives to some district schools.

PARKS MIDDLE SCHOOL

1090 Windsor Street SW
Atlanta, Georgia 30310

Principal: Christopher Waller
Testing Coordinator: Dr. Alfred Kiel

SRT-2 Executive Director: Michael Pitts

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Parks Middle School in 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, and 2010. Fifty-nine people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Seven teachers confessed to cheating. Cheating at Parks is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms, confessions and witness testimony. The cheating started when Principal Christopher Waller began at Parks and recruited two teachers to change answers in 2006. As the years progressed, more teachers got involved. In all years, the cheating was organized and facilitated by Principal Waller and Success-For-All Facilitator Sandra Ward. Assistant Principal Gregory Reid also participated. The cheating was reflected in the statistically improbable testing gains and extremely high numbers of flagged classrooms in 2009 for high wrong-to-right erasures. Parks had the highest percentage of flagged classrooms in the State of Georgia. Teachers gave students the answers to the tests, organized changing “parties” where the answer sheets were changed, and illegally accessed the test booklets before testing. The cheating was conducted covertly so that Testing Coordinator Dr. Alfred Kiel would not discover it.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	89.5	4
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	51	3
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	19(18)	3(0)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	11.9	3.2
High Flagged Standard Deviation	29.4	3.4
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.4	3.1

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Narrative

Christopher Waller became the principal of Parks in the fall of 2005. Waller directed cheating the first year he presided over CRCT testing in 2006. He gave teacher Damany Lewis a key to the room where the tests were kept. Lewis removed the plastic wrap from the test booklets and photocopied the tests. Lewis gave the copies to other teachers, who used the advance copies to give students the answers. A select group of teachers that Waller organized and trusted would change wrong answers to right answers each day during the week of testing. There is also evidence that Waller directed cheating on the secured writing tests.

Each year Principal Waller and his crew brought more teachers into the cheating conspiracy. Waller, Gregory Reid, or Sandra Ward went to these teachers’ classrooms and told

them it was “time to go.” The teachers understood that “time to go” meant they were to go to the room where the tests were kept and change answers.

Dr. Alfred Kiel was the testing coordinator for this school. He would not allow cheating so Principal Waller orchestrated Kiel’s absence from the school building so the cheating could take place. On one occasion in 2009, Principal Waller took Kiel out for a “retirement lunch.” In another year, Principal Waller scheduled an impromptu after-school dance so that the teachers could stay late in the afternoon and cheat without raising suspicion. Kiel once noticed that things in his office had been disturbed while he was out and became angry. After that occasion, teacher Damany Lewis took pictures of Kiel’s office before he altered the tests so that everything would be put back in exactly the same place so as not to raise Kiel’s suspicions. No one implicated Kiel except Principal Waller.

B. APS’ Knowledge of Cheating

District Leadership knew Principal Waller was cheating. *See discussion of Reginal Dukes’ investigation into Parks Middle School in Volume Three of this Report.* Dr. Beverly Hall, Dr. Kathy Augustine, Millicent Few, and others were aware of Dukes’ investigation and findings. No action was taken against Principal Waller.

Dr. Hall also should have known Waller was cheating at Parks because once he became principal, the school immediately made dramatic gains on the CRCT and other tests. For example, between the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 school years, eighth graders meeting or exceeding standards in reading increased by 31 percentage points, from 50% to 81%. The percentage of students meeting and exceeding standards in English/language arts increased by 27 percentage points, from 54% to 81%. In math, the percentage of eighth graders who met or exceeded the standards increased from 24% to 86%. The percentage of students exceeding expectations went from 1% to 46%, a 45 point increase. In 2006-2007, one year after Dukes’ investigation into Parks, the school met 100% of targets set by APS.

There is no evidence that APS management instituted any additional investigations into Parks despite the improbable gains in scores and Dukes’ conclusion that cheating occurred on the eighth grade writing test in 2006. Instead, APS publicly touted Waller and Parks Middle School for its achievements. Dr. Beverly Hall praised Principal Waller’s performance, saying, “You have to find someone who is able to go in and, while not being a dictator, gets people’s attention and articulates a vision and mission in a way that people want to be on board with it” A copy of Sarah Torian’s *Beating the Odds at Atlanta’s Parks Middle School* is included as **Attachment A**.

C. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Damany Lewis (Teacher)

Damany Lewis was the first teacher to assist Principal Waller in cheating. He admitted to cheating in 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009. In 2006, Waller asked Lewis, “Do you think you could get into something undetected?” Lewis was not sure what Waller meant, but said yes. A few days later, Lewis was summoned to the main office where he found Principal Waller and Sandra Ward with the CRCT booklets. Principal Waller looked at Lewis and then immediately looked

at the test booklets. Lewis then knew what Principal Waller was asking him to “get into undetected”—the test booklets. Lewis found a key in his desk drawer that opened the room where the tests were kept. Lewis used a razor blade to open the plastic wrapping around the test booklets, copied the test for each grade, and resealed the wrapping using a lighter to melt the plastic. Once Lewis copied the booklets, he placed a copy of the social studies test in Damien Northern’s car and a copy of the reading and language arts test in Dorothea Wilson’s car.

After the students had taken the test, Lewis changed answers. On one occasion, Crystal Draper came to the room where Lewis was erasing. Lewis assumed Waller sent her. In 2006, Lewis and Draper worked together to change answers. Each year more teachers would assist in the cheating. In 2007 or 2008, Lewis, Draper, and Damien Northern changed answers. Teachers Adrienne Powell, Kimberly Oden, and Latasha Smiley may have also assisted that year. In 2009, the group of cheating teachers grew again. The following teachers were present in the room where the tests were being erased: Crystal Draper, Damien Northern, Starlette Mitchell, Dorothea Wilson, Adrienne Powell and Kimberly Oden. Principal Waller always knew when and where Lewis and the others were altering tests.

Lewis spent one to two hours per day altering tests. At Waller’s direction, Lewis cheated every year that Waller was Principal. Waller gave Lewis access to the test booklets before testing started and Lewis made copies of the tests, handed them out and changed answers. During testing week, Principal Waller, Ward, or Reid would tell Lewis to go to the main office. Principal Waller would tell Lewis, “Do what you do.” Lewis would get the tests and erase answers.

The teachers only changed answers when Testing Coordinator Kiel was out of the school. In 2007, Kiel noticed things in his office were in a different place than where he had left them. After that, Lewis started taking the tests from Kiel’s office into the room next door to change answers. Lewis either marked where the tests had been or took pictures of the undisturbed office, so he could put everything back without Kiel noticing.

2. Crystal Draper (Teacher)

Crystal Draper admitted cheating in 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009. Draper first changed tests in 2006 and continued through 2009. Gregory Reid usually told her where to go and alter the answer sheets. There was one year when Principal Waller said, “The bins [containing the tests] are in such-and-such room.”

In 2009, Reid sent Draper to Kiel’s office. Draper erased answers in the office with Damany Lewis, Damien Northern and Dorothea Wilson. While Draper was erasing answers, Sandra Ward and Starlette Mitchell came into the room with a blue cooler, put sixth grade tests in the container, and left the room with the cooler and tests. That same day, Kimberly Simpson, who had not participated in previous years, knocked on the door to Kiel’s office. Because Simpson had not helped cheat before, the teachers were not comfortable with Simpson seeing them change answers, so they did not answer the door.

Principal Waller directed Draper to cheat. In 2006, Principal Waller told her to go to the room where the tests were kept and change wrong answers to right answers. Principal Waller

would often walk by Draper and make comments such as, “I need those numbers.” She said that teachers were afraid of Principal Waller because he would punish people if they did not do what he asked.

3. *Damien Northern (Teacher)*

Damien Northern confessed to cheating in 2008 and 2009 and possibly in 2007 as well. Members of the Parks Middle School faculty cheated the entire time Waller was principal. Waller recruited Damany Lewis and Crystal Draper and directed them to get others involved. In 2007 or 2008, Waller told Lewis to recruit Northern because Lewis needed help. The teachers already cheating included: Damany Lewis, Crystal Draper, Starlette Mitchell, and Dorothea Wilson.

In 2009, Sandra Ward sent Northern to Kiel’s office where the tests were kept. When he arrived, he felt there were too many people in the room. He recalls that Starlette Mitchell, Charles Mitchell, Wilson, Draper, Adrienne Powell, and Latasha Smiley were there. Northern did not change answers that year because he did not trust everyone present.

One year Principal Waller was standing directly outside the door of the room while they were changing answers.

On another occasion, Northern found a copy of the test questions in his box. He does not know who put them there.

Northern believes cheating goes on all over the district. He has had students that cannot read yet scored very high on the reading portion of the CRCT.

Ward asked Lewis, Northern, Wilson, and Mitchell for copies of the Governor’s subpoenas they received with regard to this investigation. Ward told them that she would provide them with an attorney.

4. *Latasha Smiley (Teacher)*

Latasha Smiley admits to cheating in 2009. Francesca Thompson-Flagle, a PEC teacher, gave Smiley a copy of the 2009 CRCT. The copy was difficult to read. Later that day, Gregory Reid told Smiley that Damany Lewis had a “gift” for her. Smiley found a manila envelope containing a legible copy of the tests on her desk. During the test, Smiley improperly gave students the correct answers.

One afternoon, Lewis told Smiley to come with him. They went to Kiel’s office and Smiley erased answers with the other teachers in the room. After the testing period was complete, Lewis came to Smiley’s classroom and told her to come with him. They went together to Kiel’s office where Lewis took pictures of the room so that he could place everything back in its original place after they changed the tests. Smiley erased answers with the other teachers in the room.

Principal Waller told Smiley to let him know if anyone contacted her regarding this investigation.

5. Charles Mitchell (Teacher)

Charles Mitchell confessed to cheating in 2009. In 2008, he started receiving copies of various tests, including the CRCT and APS benchmark assessments, in advance of their administration. He reviewed the tests and made sure he covered all of the material with his students.

In 2009, Mitchell was told to report to Kiel's office. When Mitchell arrived he saw teachers were changing answers. While the teachers changed tests, Waller and Reid kept Dr. Kiel occupied. Mitchell changed answers three times that year. One of those times Waller was in the room. Principal Waller told the teachers that they were there to make sure the students passed the test and that they only had limited time to get the tests "corrected." Waller was holding a basket of the tests. He reached in and touched the tests and Ward said to Waller, "Don't touch those."

Principal Waller gave Crystal Draper \$1,000 in cash because her homeroom had the highest percentage of students pass the CRCT. He gave her the money on the way to the annual Convocation, in front of all the other teachers.

SRT-2 Executive Director Michael Pitts came to Parks Middle School after this investigation began and told teachers that he believed this inquiry was racially and politically motivated.

6. Starlette Mitchell (Teacher)

Starlette Mitchell admitted to changing answers on the 2009 CRCT, but denied changing answers prior to that year.

7. Dorothea Wilson (Teacher)

Dorothea Wilson confessed to cheating in 2008 and 2009. Wilson does not remember what year she began changing answers but knows she cheated in at least 2008 and 2009. She corroborates the testimony of Damany Lewis, Crystal Draper, and Damien Northern. Wilson cheated because she felt like her "back was up against a wall." Principal Waller walked by her classroom often and said, "I need the numbers, I need the numbers." Principal Waller also said to her, "I don't get no tests, my hands are clean."

Wilson testified that Waller "got greedy" in 2009. This led to more teachers erasing answers.

On the first day of the 2010-2011 school year, SRT-2 Executive Director Michael Pitts told the teachers that Principal Waller was being reassigned because of the cheating allegations. According to Wilson, Pitts told the teachers that "[you] better not start saying anything if [you] have not already said it, because [you will] get your own self in trouble."

D. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Christopher M. Waller (Principal)

We interviewed Principal Waller twice and he was represented by counsel on both occasions. Waller denied causing or participating in cheating.

Principal Christopher Waller was first interviewed on November 8, 2010. He could not explain the high number of wrong-to-right erasures at his school. He suggested that if cheating occurred, it was likely at the Brewer Center where the schools submit the completed tests. Speaking specifically about the 2009 CRCT, Waller claimed that he was absent the week of testing. Despite Principal Waller's testimony, multiple teachers testified that he was present for the 2009 testing.

We interviewed Principal Waller a second time on April 18, 2011. After answering a few questions, he stepped out of the room to consult with his attorney. When Waller returned, his attorney informed us that Principal Waller would be invoking his Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination. Nonetheless, he continued answering questions.

Principal Waller testified under oath that he was not aware of anyone erasing answers at Parks. He offered several defenses for why he would not have been involved in cheating, including: (a) his "financial situation," meaning he was wealthy and would not compromise his integrity for his principal's salary of approximately \$100,000 per year; and (b) the fact that he was a Reverend at a Methodist Church.

Principal Waller said that the only person with a key to the room where the tests were kept was Dr. Kiel. Waller denied ever having a key to that office. Principal Waller told us that we should talk to Kiel. When asked whether he remembered any reports of testing irregularities, Waller identified only one instance where a teacher reported that a student wrote an answer down for another student in 2010. (This is in conflict with the testimony of teachers. Fabiola Aurelien reported cheating in 2006. Megan Eckert reported a testing impropriety in 2010.) There was also an OIR investigation in 2006 related to cheating on the eighth grade writing test.

We covertly monitored a phone call and a meeting between Principal Waller and other parties. Waller told one of the cheating teachers that the "procedure was followed" and maybe it was the "school district or the state [that cheated]." He also said, "If you didn't erase yourself, you have nothing to worry about." Waller said that the investigators were going to try to get "everyone to lie" about what happened at Parks, and that no one had to talk them. Waller laughed about this investigation and said he intends to file a lawsuit against the Governor's investigators. At a monitored meeting, Principal Waller said that "no one [at the school] said they touched the tests" and that the investigators "[had] nothing."

2. Gregory Reid (Assistant Principal)

Gregory Reid was the Assistant Principal during all of Principal Waller's tenure. According to witnesses, Reid was actively involved and assisted Principal Waller in the cheating conspiracy. Reid denied any knowledge of cheating.

3. Sandra Ward (Success for All (SFA) Facilitator)

Sandra Ward was the SFA Facilitator at Parks. When interviewed by the GBI, Ward refused to answer questions after invoking her Fifth Amendment right not to incriminate herself.

4. Adrienne Powell (Teacher)

Adrienne Powell was a sixth grade teacher in 2009. While witnesses implicated Powell, she denied cheating or having any knowledge of cheating.

5. Kimberly Oden (Teacher)

Kimberly Oden was a teacher at Parks in 2009. She had no flagged classrooms; however, witnesses say she erased answers in 2009. Oden is no longer teaching in APS and we were not able to locate her for an interview.

6. Francesca Thompson-Flagle (Teacher)

Latasha Smiley says Thompson-Flagle gave her a copy of the CRCT booklet. Thompson-Flagle denied knowledge of cheating, or that she gave a copy of the test to anyone.

E. Testimony of Additional Witnesses

1. Stacey Johnson (Teacher)

Stacey Johnson taught math at Parks. Waller asked Johnson to cheat and said that he just wanted to look good and would Johnson help make him look good. Johnson refused to cheat and felt ostracized by Principal Waller for her refusal. For example, Waller would meet with all of the academic coaches but specifically excluded Johnson. Waller would also make references to Johnson not being on “his team” in front of other teachers.

Principal Waller ordered a clerk to alter attendance records so that the school would meet the attendance requirement of AYP. Johnson reported all of this information to SRT-2 Executive Director Michael Pitts in 2006.

According to Johnson, there has been cheating in APS at least as far back as 2002. Three APS elementary schools feed students into Parks Middle School: Dunbar, Gideons, and Capitol View. Students from those elementary schools arrive and immediately take a baseline assessment test. Many of these middle school students would score on a first grade level despite having done well on the CRCT while in elementary school. These students were expected to do equally well on the CRCT while in middle school. Those expectations were unreasonable since their scores in elementary school were artificially inflated.

2. Tameka Grant (Teacher)

Tameka Grant taught at Parks from 2003 until 2006 and knows of cheating there. She testified that eighth grade students were given the writing question prior to the administration of the test.

Many of her students at Parks previously attended Gideons Elementary. Since students scored well on the CRCT at Gideons, Principal Waller often said that the students should do equally well at Parks.

Tameka Grant corroborates the allegations of other witnesses. Grant's contract with APS was not renewed for the 2011-2012 school year. She believes that this is retaliation for speaking out about the misconduct at this school.

3. Fabiola Aurelien (Teacher)

Fabiola Aurelien taught at Parks from 2004 to 2006. She did not participate in, but was aware of, cheating. Teachers cheated on the CRCT by improperly giving students the correct answers. For example, Damany Lewis walked around the class during the administration of the test and pointed out the right answers. On the eighth grade writing test, someone gave Aurelien's students the question.

Principal Waller failed to give Aurelien a promotion because she refused to help him cheat. Waller told her she could have the position if she "would be on his team." Aurelien said that "being on his team" meant "cheating." She told Principal Waller she would not cheat and he did not promote her.

In 2006, Aurelien knew that Crystal Draper and Dorothea Wilson helped students with the CRCT. Aurelien reported the misconduct to Principal Waller, who said he could not take action unless she had more information. Shortly after Aurelien spoke up, Principal Waller informed all of the teachers that Aurelien reported cheating and then he reported her allegations to APS. APS conducted an investigation into Aurelien's allegations and she was interviewed several times.

Shortly after Aurelien was interviewed by an investigator for APS in January of 2006, SRT-2 Executive Director Michael Pitts held a meeting with the faculty. He told the teachers that "there is nothing you can do to make us think negatively of Principal Waller." Aurelien believes Pitts was trying to keep people from complaining about misconduct at the school.

4. Megan Eckert (Teacher)

Eckert taught special needs students and administered the CRCT in April 2010. While she was reading the test to her class, after most classrooms had finished, paraprofessional Chynel Walker came into Eckert's classroom and asked to see the test booklet. Eckert initially refused, but then gave her the document. Walker quickly took the test booklet out of the classroom. Eckert followed her into the hallway where Waller was standing. Eckert believes Principal Waller directed Walker to get a copy of the test booklet.

Eckert gave a written report of this apparent testing violation to her supervisor. Principal Waller summoned Eckert to his office and told her that she had committed a testing violation by giving Walker the test booklet. He ordered her to change the report to say that Walker took a "teacher's manual" rather than a "test booklet." Principal Waller told her what the report should say. He wrote up the report and gave it to Eckert to sign. Principal Waller submitted this false document to APS Research Associate Dr. Cari Ryan.

Eckert also heard about Sandra Ward and Starlette Mitchell taking tests out of the school in the coolers.

5. Chynel Walker (Paraprofessional)

Walker administered the CRCT to special needs children who are given accommodations on the CRCT. The test is read to them and there is no time limit for completing the test. In 2010, Walker started to turn in the tests when she realized two students had not finished. She told Principal Waller. Principal Waller instructed her to turn in all but the two unfinished tests and then go get another testing booklet from Eckert. Walker went to Eckert's classroom and took Eckert's testing booklet. Walker went back to her classroom to allow the students to finish the test. She then turned in the tests and gave Principal Waller the testing booklet. Principal Waller said he would take it back to Eckert. Eckert later told Walker that the booklet was not there when she turned the test in, so she was one booklet short and reported a testing violation.

F. Other Evidence

SRT-4 Director Tamara Cotman told teachers at Harper-Archer Middle School to visit Parks and see what they were doing to achieve such good CRCT scores. See Testimony of Lebroyc Sublett at Harper-Archer.

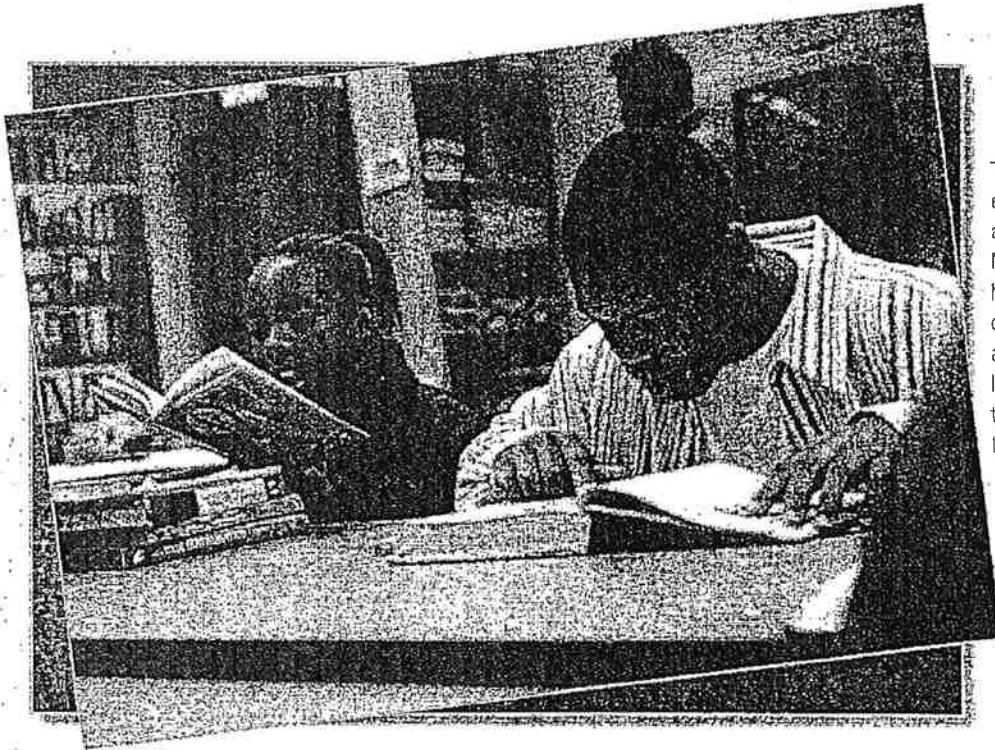
IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

We conclude that Principal Waller directed cheating on the CRCT and a number of other tests. Gregory Reid and Sandra Ward helped Principal Waller facilitate cheating. Principal Waller directed cheating in essentially the same manner all four years of his time at Parks Middle School.

We further conclude that Damany Lewis, Crystal Draper, Damien Northern, Dorothea Wilson, Charles Mitchell, Starlette Mitchell, Adrienne Powell, Kimberly Oden, Francesca Thompson-Flagle and Latasha Smiley cheated on the CRCT. Dr. Alfred Kiel was not involved in, and did not know of, the cheating at Parks Middle School. Given the efforts Principal Waller made to hide his scheme from Kiel, we conclude Kiel cannot be faulted for not discovering the cheating.

Due to the highly unlikely gains in scores under Principal Waller's leadership, the reports of cheating from teachers like Stacey Johnson, and the investigative report of Reginal Dukes in 2006, we conclude that Superintendent Beverly Hall and her cabinet knew, or should have known, that there was cheating at this school. Teachers felt as if they had no option but to do what Principal Waller directed them to. Several teachers reported Waller's misconduct in 2005 and 2006. APS did not discipline Waller. In fact, SRT-2 Director Michael Pitts held a meeting at Parks and told the teachers to "stop writing letters about Waller because he is not going anywhere." Dr. Hall held Waller out to the public as a "model principal." Michael Pitts dismissed our investigation and said that it was "racist." Pitts attempted to interfere with and suppress this investigation.

Beating the Odds at Atlanta's Parks Middle School



The learning environment at Parks Middle School has changed dramatically according to long-time Parks teacher Damany Lewis.

By Sarah Taylor

An inner-city middle school with many risk factors—94% of its students are poor—has experienced a dramatic turnaround during the past few years. Why has this happened? The answers involve new leaders who received lots of support, a relentless focus on data, and involvement by a broad range of partners and community residents.

In recent years, Atlanta's Walter Leonard Parks Middle School has beaten the odds. Despite being defined as a "Needs Improvement" school for eight straight years—and despite serving predominantly low-income children from single parent households in a struggling urban neighborhood—Parks has witnessed remarkable improvements in student achievement. In math, for example, the percentage of eighth graders exceeding the state's standards rose from 1% to 46%.

Atlanta Public Schools

In one year the percentage of eighth graders meeting standards in reading increased by 43 percentage points, from 35% to 78%.

These improvements have enabled the school to achieve "Adequate Yearly Progress" during both the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 school years. It is no longer being defined as a "Needs Improvement" school under Title 1 and the No Child Left Behind law.

Parks is the only middle school located in Atlanta's Neighborhood Planning Unit V (NPU-V). NPU-V is south of downtown and includes six historic neighborhoods, including the Pittsburgh neighborhood, where Parks is located. Pittsburgh has been a focus of the work of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Atlanta "Civic Site," a long-term effort to make low-income neighborhoods more supportive of children and their families.

During the 2005-2006 school year, Parks had 504 students, nearly all of whom were African American (97%) and low income (94%).

Between the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 school years, the percentage of eighth graders meeting standards in reading increased by 43 percentage points (from 35% to 78%), while the percentage meeting standards in English/Language Arts increased by 21 percentage points (50% to 71%). In math, the percentage of eighth graders who met or exceeded the standards increased from 24% to 86%.

Why These Dramatic Gains? A wide range of interrelated factors have contributed to Parks' success during the past few years, including improvements made under a former principal, effective and visionary leadership, data-driven planning and instruction, high expectations for staff and students, strategic partners (and the support and funding they offer), increased discipline and professional development.

Finding Effective Leadership and a Strong Staff

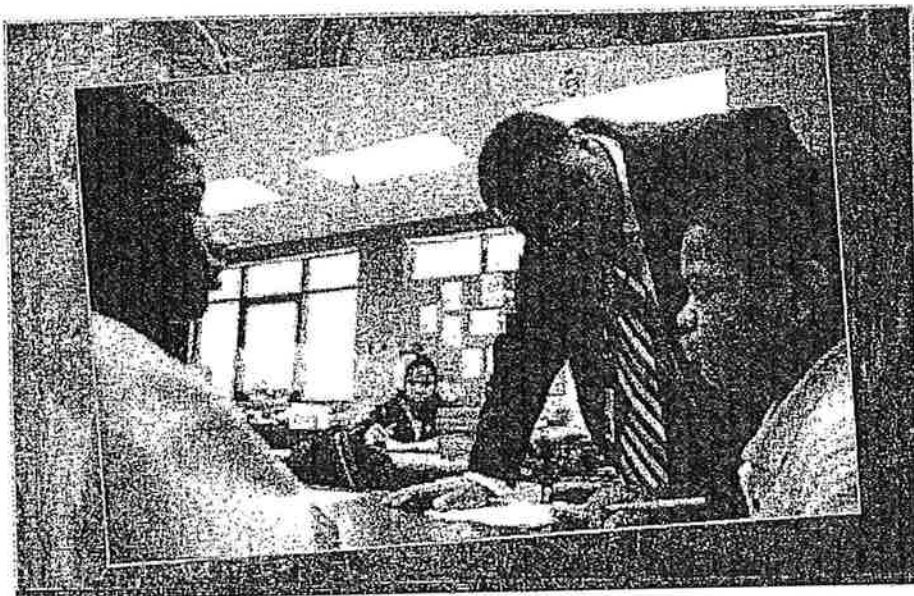
When Dr. Beverly L. Hall accepted the leadership of the Atlanta Public School system in 1999, she knew that she would have to look immediately at the leaders of the schools. She quickly began the process of changing principals based upon the performance of the students in their schools. "You have issues with principals when the schools are fail-

Inside:

2	Finding Effective Leadership
6	Following Proven Reform Models
9	Using Data to Drive Instruction
11	Setting High Expectations and Cultivating Support
13	Setting a Clear Vision
16	Building Strategic Partnerships
20	Improving the School's Environment
22	Moving Forward

"You have to find someone who is able to go in and, while not being a dictator, gets people's attention and articulates a vision and mission in a way that people want to be on board with it...."

—Dr. Beverly L. Hall



Principal Christopher Waller hired an assistant principal to handle discipline so he could focus on improving academics.

ing," she says. She sought leaders with high standards and a commitment to making sure students succeed.

"You have to find someone who is able to lead," Hall explains. "That sounds vague, but they must be able to go in and, while not being a dictator, get people's attention and articulate a vision and mission in a way that people want to be on board with it...."

Christopher Waller was that person for Parks Middle School, becoming principal in February 2005. "I thought [Waller] possessed the leadership skills," Hall said. "I knew he cared personally for poor children. He identified with them and knew their potential."

About This Report

This report is based on interviews done by Atlanta Civic Site Diarist Sarah Torian with 17 administrators, teachers, Atlanta Public School System leaders, school resource providers, community partners and others, as well as site visits. It is also drawn from an analysis of No Child Left Behind test results and a review of information on the Atlanta Public Schools and Georgia Department of Education websites and other reports.

While this report focuses on the factors that contributed to the increases in student achievement during the 2005–2006 school year, strategies that were implemented during the 2006–2007 school year are also included because the interviews were conducted over the course of eight months in early 2007.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

"Skepticism can mess up an organization. If you have folks on the team who don't think you can win, you are in trouble. We had to get some people *off* the bus first. Then, we had to get the right people *on* the bus."

—Christopher Waller

But Waller was not the first principal to improve test scores at Parks. During the previous three years, test scores had increased steadily, the result of a new approach to leadership begun by Superintendent Hall's "School Reform Team 2" (or SRT 2), according to SRT 2 Executive Director Michael Pitts.

"When I came in [to lead SRT 2], we brought in new leadership at Parks," explains Pitts. "All of the principals in SRT 2 and across Atlanta Public Schools were being trained to turn a school around using student data and keep students engaged through unit-based work. We were trying to build teacher and student morale."

But the principal who helped achieve this success had been dismissed in the summer of 2004, the result of alleged misconduct at a different school. This principal's dismissal caused unrest among the faculty and the community, and test scores faltered, creating an extra challenge for Waller.

To help meet this challenge, Waller brought in a team of new leaders that he recruited during his first summer. He hired a former elementary school teacher, Sandra Ward, to be the Success For All (SFA) reading facilitator.

"Mr. Waller intentionally hired an elementary school reading teacher to be the SFA facilitator because elementary school teachers have a strong background in helping students learn to read," explains Project GRAD Executive Director Kweku Forstall. (Project

GRAD is a reform model that provides support for teachers and students.)

At the recommendation of Jackie Daniels, the interim principal's mentor, Waller hired an assistant principal, Gregory Reid, to focus on student discipline. Waller recognized that his focus needed to be on instruction and partner recruitment.

"If I kept doing all of the disciplinary work, I would never really have become the principal..." explains Waller. "Having [Reid] on board has allowed me to be the principal, to deal with the things that principals have to deal with."

Waller also hired a new Special Education Administrator.

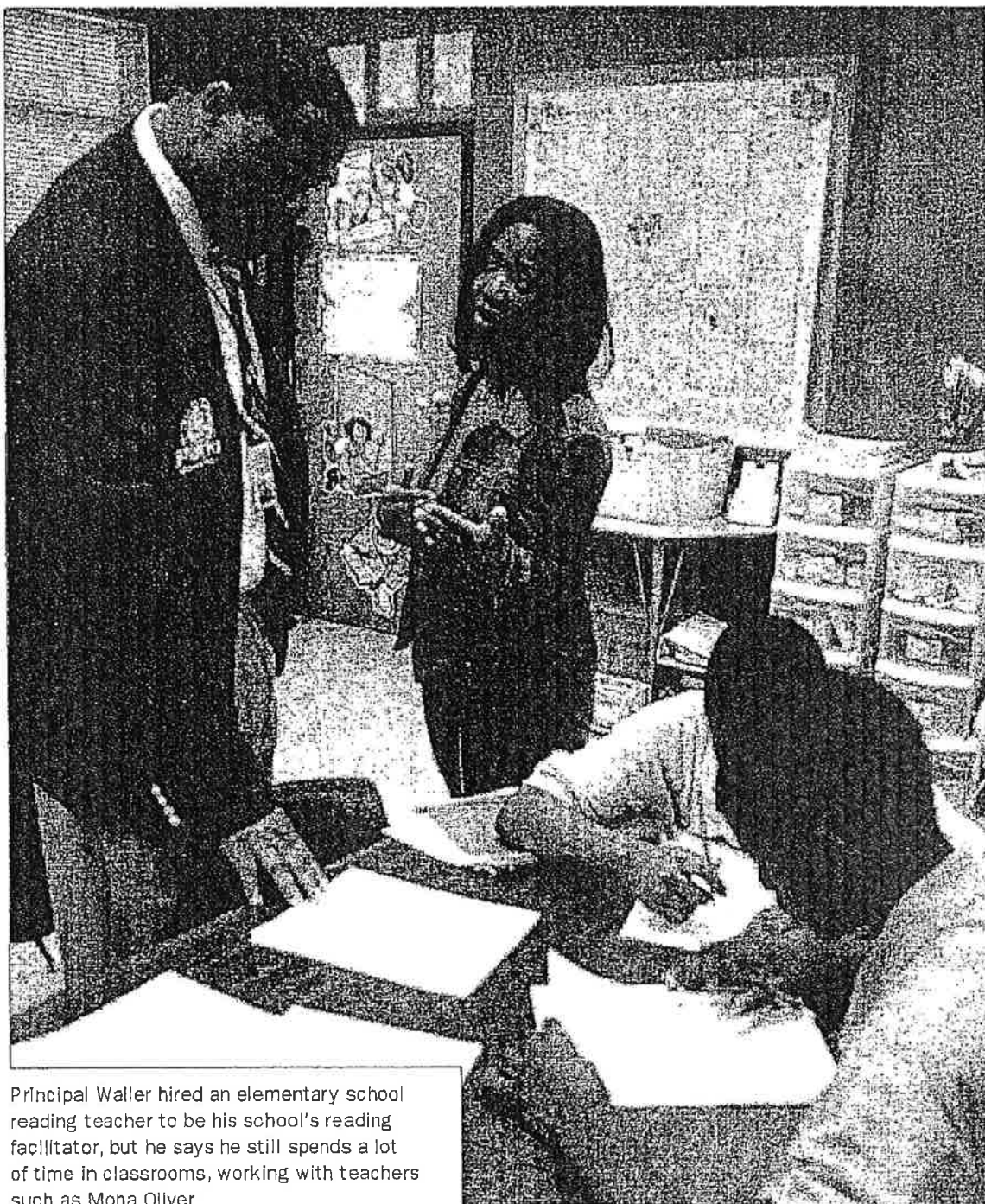
Not only did Waller have to focus on hiring new staff, he also had to focus on making sure the current staff was serving in the most effective positions. "Skepticism can mess up an organization," explains Waller. "If you have folks on the team who don't think you can win, you are in trouble.... So we had to get some people *off* the bus first. Then, we had to get the right people *on* the bus.

"At first, I thought that was it, but it wasn't. Once you get the right people on the bus, you have to get them in the right *seats* on the bus. That was the final stage and that is what we have been working on recently.... We are doing that based upon the data, performance, test scores and observation."



“Basically, all of the principals’ issues are handled right here in this office. My job is to make sure that those issues are taken care of so that the principals can be instructional leaders and not have to worry about the more common things that they would have to worry about all of the time.”

—Michael Pitts



Principal Waller hired an elementary school reading teacher to be his school's reading facilitator, but he says he still spends a lot of time in classrooms, working with teachers such as Mona Oliver.

"The rubber hits the road in the classroom every day.
Teachers need ongoing support and coaching to become very proficient."

—Kweku Forstall

Following Proven Reform Models and Emphasizing Professional Development

No school can increase student achievement without effective teaching in the classroom. To ensure that classroom instruction supported student success, Parks faculty and leadership drew on a variety of resources, including the School Reform Team 2, the Project GRAD reform model, the Georgia Department of Education and others.

School Reform Team 2

When Dr. Beverly Hall became Atlanta Public Schools superintendent, she brought with her the idea of School Reform Teams (SRT). SRTs are designed to be one-stop shops, providing the schools in each team with the supports and services they need to most effectively serve and teach their students. Each SRT, led by an executive director who has been a successful principal, offers support to its schools on maintenance, hiring and legal issues as well as teacher training, mentoring and coaching.

"Basically, all of the principals' issues are handled right here in this office," explains SRT 2 Executive Director Pitts. "My job is to make sure that those issues are taken care of so that the principals can be instructional leaders and not have to worry about the more common things that they would have to worry about all of the time."

"Leadership team meetings have to be instructionally focused," explains Dr. Cheryl Hunley, a retired principal brought in to support principals at Parks and six other schools. "There are other meetings in which you can deal with the facilities and the technical aspects of the job, but the leadership team must have an instructional focus to determine what they need and where they go from here."

Project GRAD

Project GRAD is the reform model that was launched in SRT 2 schools to help them improve student achievement and success at the beginning of the 2002–2003 school year. Project GRAD seeks to ensure a quality public school education for all at-risk children in economically disadvantaged communities so that high school graduation rates increase and graduates are prepared to enter and succeed in college. It focuses on training and support for teachers to help them deliver quality instruction and effectively manage their classrooms.

Project GRAD includes professional development for teachers, ongoing support with constructive feedback, coaching and re-training when necessary. This support has been critical, Waller believes. "It was the professional development that paved the way to increase the teachers' knowledge base and their arsenals of strategies."

"Data increases your awareness. You can't know where you are going if you don't know where you are."

—Christopher Waller

Using Data in the Classroom

Data has become a critical tool to improve student success at Parks Middle School, being used by the school's teachers and administrators in their planning and instruction. They use data to regularly assess how well students are learning, whether the school is meeting its School Reform Team-required benchmarks and whether students are prepared for their "Criterion Referenced Competency Tests."

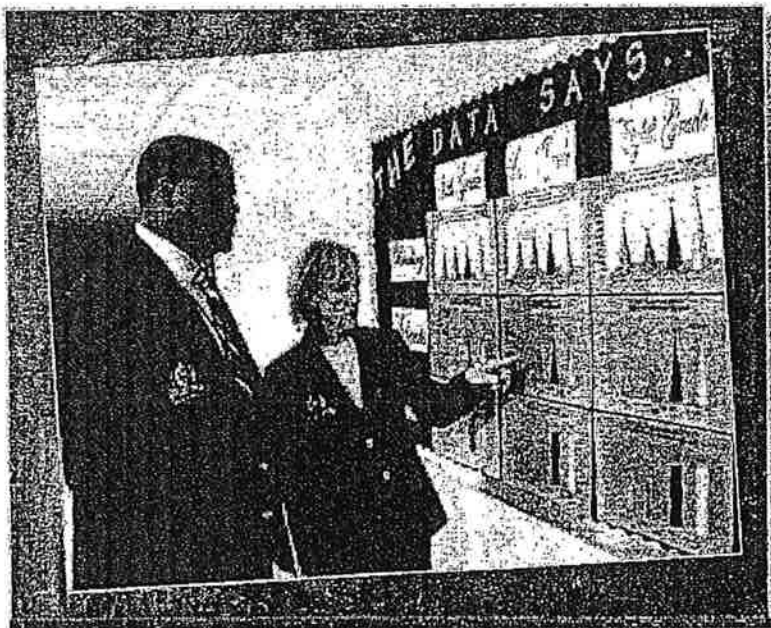
After conveying information focused on a set of objectives (such as measuring perimeter and area), a teacher will assess the students' mastery of those objectives with a short test. Each question will be linked to one of the covered objectives. The teacher will review the results of the

assessment and will compile a summary for each student of which questions they missed and how these questions align with the learning objectives.

The students will be assigned to small groups or "pods" based upon which objectives they hadn't mastered. For the next few days, the small groups will work together on problems related to that objective and review their homework and class notes on that topic. Students who did not miss any questions will be provided with more challenging work or reinforcement exercises targeted to their needs.

These regular class assessments are complemented by assessments required by SRT 2 every nine weeks, which ensure that students are pro-

gressing and which identify those who are falling behind so that they can receive additional support.



Waller says that when he became principal "I gave the data to everybody... and they used it for instructional purposes.... Even the kids know their data." Here Waller and Casey Foundation education consultant Elizabeth Kelly discuss data on test scores that is posted in the school's hallway.

"Ms. Hunley has been there, done that. She provides quality advice to our administrative leaders and they convey the ideas to us in a way that works for our school."

—Damany Lewis

"The rubber hits the road in the classroom every day," says Kweku Forstall, Project GRAD Atlanta's executive director. "Teachers need ongoing support and coaching to become very proficient in delivering their areas of instruction.... Experienced teachers who are good should be helping less proficient teachers through mentoring and visiting classrooms and sharing best practices."

Project GRAD also does data collection and evaluation. Data collection includes quarterly assessments in reading and math and semi-annual class visits to evaluate classroom management. Data are also collected to track discipline referrals, parent involvement and student attendance and to measure the change in public perceptions of school safety and organization.

"Data increases your awareness," says Waller. "You can't know where you are going if you don't know where you are."

Recognizing that non-academic issues can serve as barriers to student achievement, Project GRAD partners with Communities In Schools (CIS) to provide services to address those issues. CIS support helps increase student attendance and parent involvement and includes one-on-one and small group counseling with at-risk students, as well as access to dental, hearing and vision exams.

"GRAD is not an overnight results program," explains Forstall. "It's about incremental progress in trying to close the achievement gap."

Training and support from the Georgia Department of Education

In an effort to support "Needs Improvement" schools, the Education Department's State School Improvement Division began to provide expert consultation to struggling schools in 2004. The state assigned Dr. Cheryl Hunley to serve in Parks and six other area schools. She was trained by the state and given a set of tools, instruments and resources to support school improvement in the targeted schools.

She came on board at Parks during the summer of 2004, immediately following the removal of the former principal. She worked closely with both the interim principal and Principal Waller to identify areas for potential improvement. She has also provided training to the staff, making sure they understood the state standards and how the curriculum prepares the students to meet those standards.

"We have had to go back and do professional learning on rigor, relevance and relationship," she explains. "If it is not important, we don't teach it.... A child's project is no better than the assignment you give them. You can't give them busy work.... [The teachers] are focused on the standards."

"Ms. Hunley has been there, done that," explains Damany Lewis, a seventh grade math teacher at Parks. "She provides quality advice to our administrative leaders and they convey the ideas to us in a way that works for our school."



"Many of the teachers talked about how well the students had done before. We had to have the conversation that, if they had done well before, I wouldn't be here because you would not be in restructuring...."

—Dr. Cheryl Hunley

The professional development provided through Project GRAD, SRT 2 and Georgia DOE has paved the way for increasing the teachers' knowledge base and their "treasure chests" of strategies to improve learning.

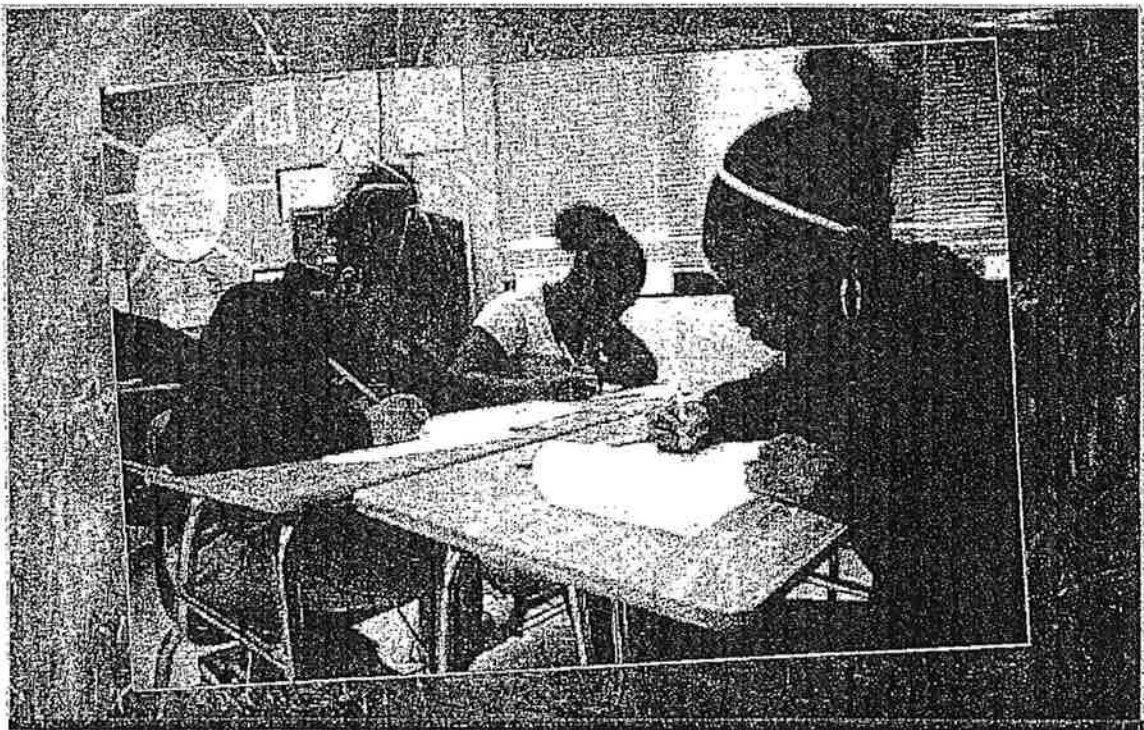
"There are more deliberate meetings around curriculum happening on a consistent basis," reports Catalina Sibilsky, Principal in Residence of Atlanta Public Schools and Project Manager of Atlanta's middle school transformation work. "There are more tools for consistent use of assessments. There are lots more conversations around curriculum instruction."

Using Data To Drive Instruction and Develop Individual Learning Plans

During Superintendent Hall's eight-year tenure at APS, the system has increased its use of data to drive instruction and track student progress.

APS workshops emphasize the need to let the data drive instruction, and APS continues to implement new technology to support teachers' and schools' efforts to use data to increase student achievement.

To keep close track on how students are progressing, Parks Middle School students take frequent tests.



"It's not magic. You focus on the data to determine where to place resources. If the reading level is down in one grade, you focus additional resources on students and teachers at that level."

—Kweku Forstall

"It's not magic," explains Project GRAD's Forstall. "You focus on the data to determine where to place resources. If the reading level is down in one grade, you focus additional resources on students and teachers at that level. You look at the data and you hold people accountable."

As the 2005–2006 school year began, the teachers and administrators at Parks examined the data and planned accordingly. "[Waller] is a little more focused on the data and where they have to go with regards to AYP [Adequate Yearly Progress] in order to be successful," explains SRT 2's Pitts. "His acceleration in using the data and the data 'dashboards' probably allowed him to move faster than others."

Data were already being used to guide instruction and planning at Parks, but Waller changed the way that it was used and integrated it more deeply into the planning, decision-making and instruction. Before he joined the staff, awareness of the data was limited and those who were aware of it tended to use it for quotation purposes rather than planning purposes.

"When I came, I gave the data to everybody," Waller explains. "Everybody knew the data...and they used it for instruction purposes.... Even the kids know their data. They can tell you their individual scores and what their goal is."

"You have to let the data drive the instruction," says Sandra Ward, the school's reading facilitator. "Not just from bench-

marks and standardized tests. Data needs to drive day-by-day teaching. In each lesson you need to assess the students to make sure they have mastered it."

The limited awareness and understanding of the data was evidenced in Hunley's coaching of some of the faculty. "Many of the teachers talked about how well the students had done before [Mr. Waller was hired]," Hunley remembers. "We had to have the conversation that, if they had done well before, I wouldn't be here because you would not be in restructuring.... They perceived that the years before were so much better. They did not understand that the data did not substantiate what they were saying."

She began to realize that their evaluation of the school's performance was based not on student achievement, but on how comfortable they were in their job. "There was a culture, a comfort zone, that was good for them," she adds. "One of the things Mr. Waller had to do was break up that comfort zone because that was not good for the kids. They equated doing well with doing what they wanted to do."

Superintendent Hall agrees about the importance of insisting on accountability. "People have a hard time pointing out non-performance. They like the people and know their personal situations, so they will make excuses for them because they are too nice and unable to deal with low performance. A good leader goes in, takes time to assess, but knows that the core business is to make

"You have to let the data drive the instruction. Not just from benchmarks and standardized tests. Data needs to drive day-by-day teaching. In each lesson you need to assess the students to make sure they have mastered it."

—Sandra Ward

sure students succeed. You have to have courage."

Hunley helped Parks' teachers to look at the data and to understand what was required to meet Adequate Yearly Progress and why they were not achieving it. "We had some very intelligent teachers who just didn't understand the process," she explains.

"Once we got the numbers right, we could put names with the numbers.... We were able to pull the data by teachers so we knew who was being effective and who was not. When we identified the effective teachers, we could look more closely at what they were doing."

The data is not only used to guide school and class planning, it is also used to develop plans for each student. Beginning during the 2006–2007 school year, teachers and faculty at Parks break the data down for each student, creating prescriptive Individual Learning Plans.

"It's just like when you go to the doctor," explains Waller. "When we give them individual instruction based upon their chart, we are able to work on their individual deficiencies."

Each student has an academic chart displaying their strengths and weaknesses so that their teachers and tutors can provide targeted instruction. Traditionally, these types of prescriptive learning plans are used only for students in special education classes, but at Parks they are used for all students.

Setting High Expectations and Cultivating Support

When Waller became principal at Parks, he was determined to turn around a long-time failing school by eliminating the achievement gap between Parks students and those at other Atlanta schools. Several faculty and staff members were wary and distrustful when Waller came on board, and he had to work hard to enlist their support for his new efforts.

The community was also uneasy. "We didn't know how long he would be there," explains Pittsburgh Community Improvement Association Executive Director LaShawn Hoffman. "I heard that a lot from the community at the beginning of his tenure. We had a new principal who had never been a principal before. We thought they were hiring him because APS didn't care. You better believe that we heard a lot of that."

Waller stressed the school's strengths and helped it to address its weaknesses. "Our comfort zone was snatched up when Mr. Waller was brought in, but he handled that well," remembers Lewis. "He didn't come in saying 'You are Needs Improvement; what you have been doing hasn't been working so you have to do it my way.' He said, 'You have been improving consistently over the past few years, so let's keep doing what you were doing, but let's improve it.'"

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

"People have a hard time pointing out non-performance. They like the people and know their personal situations, so they will make excuses for them because they are too nice and unable to deal with low performance. You have to have courage."

—Dr. Beverly L. Hall

A new way to build a team within the school

One strategy that Waller used to enlist the support of school staff was to arrange for a professional development retreat in Destin, Florida, during his first summer as principal. There he was able to bond with his new team.

"The culture was such that they were stonewalling him," remembers Hunley. "He decided...to take them to Florida, for some team building. There are places they could have gone in town, but this was a way to really get them out of their normal frame of reference.... It was a wonderful trip! I could see when they were lighting up and connecting with him."



Principal Waller brought Parks' staff members to a retreat in Florida to help build a sense of team. Pictured in this photo (from the left) are Sonya Thompson, Gregory Reid, Sandra Ward, Christopher Waller, Nechelle Sharpe, Daymon Arnold and Dr. Alfred Kiel.

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—Dr. Cheryl Hunley

During the retreat, Waller introduced some new teaching strategies, including "Differentiating Instruction" and "Inclusion and Collaboration." Differentiating Instruction recognizes that individual students have different abilities and learn in different ways. It creates multiple paths so that all students experience equally appropriate ways to absorb, use, develop and present concepts as a part of the daily learning process.

Inclusion and Collaboration brings students with special learning and behavior needs into the general education program full-time with additional support staff in the classroom. It also provides teachers the comprehensive professional development to help them develop collaborative skills so that all students can succeed in this new environment.

"We didn't have teachers protesting because we didn't talk about that at school. We talked about it in Destin—on the beach," explains Waller with a grin. "It is hard to kick an idea when you are on the beach. I think we might have received a different reaction if we had introduced it in the school's media center."

Another strategy he used to gain the support of school staff was to increase discipline. "Once I became principal, I knew the very first thing I had to do was get the climate back under control," explains Waller. "Teachers love you when you are getting control of the kids so that was the first thing we did.... You have to have a climate that is conducive to learning."

Setting a Clear Vision

At the 2005 ceremony to honor the eighth graders who were being promoted to high school, Waller outlined his vision of success for Parks. He told students, parents and faculty members, "If it can be done in Buckhead [a wealthy Atlanta neighborhood], it can be done right here in Pittsburgh," remembers Waller.

"Oh, they shouted and they clapped. That was the most amazing statement they had ever heard, that their children could succeed just like the children on the other, richer side of town."

Waller and his staff repeatedly stressed the simple vision of eliminating the achievement gap. "We didn't get into the 'la-la-la (comma) la-la-la (comma) la-la-la of educational jargon,'" he explains. "We kept it very simple. We said, 'If it can be done anywhere, it can be done right here at Parks. Academically, we will eliminate the achievement gap.'"

To achieve that simple vision, Waller immediately set higher expectations for the students, teachers, administrators and community partners at Parks. "Waller has informed the kids that they are not a hopeless cause," explains Hoffman of the Pittsburgh Community Improvement Association. "He sets high standards and demands accountability. From my perspective, he holds the children and adults in the school—including the teachers and paraprofessionals—accountable."

"Once I became principal, I knew the very first thing I had to do was get the climate back under control. Teachers love you when you are getting control of the kids. You have to have a climate that is conducive to learning."

—Christopher Waller

But high expectations by themselves "don't mean much without buy in," Waller says. "The students had to buy in, the parents had to buy in and the community had to buy in. That helped to implement the strategies that would make the expectations attainable."

Parents and community residents became more involved in the student success effort when the school began opening its doors to them and providing an array of services and programs. "We involved parents," explains Lewis. "We have a GED course here.... We have Saturday Schools. Last year, we had a program where parents could come to take a six-week computer class and get a free computer when they finished.... When you start bringing the community into it, the students respond."

Waller and others constantly highlighted the various small and large achievements the school made at every chance they got. Waller reports carrying an ever-changing note card in his pocket with him wherever he went. Whenever he got the chance—at faculty meetings, at community meetings, when he was speaking with students in the hall—he would pull the card out and announce the achievements.

To show the students that, despite their families' current economic conditions, they could achieve their dreams, Waller made sure that students knew that he had once walked in their shoes.

"When people and the students see us, they tend to see us just as we are today," shares Waller. "They don't know what you had to go through to get where you are. I realized that I couldn't be ashamed to show my children where I had been. I told them where they are today is not where they will be tomorrow. I told them, 'I have been where you are and now, look at where I am.' You talk about it. You model to them. You show them that they can get to where they want to go."

Superintendent Hall agrees with Waller's high expectations for the students at Parks. "When I can stand in front of my principals and read the list of highest-performing schools in the district, a list that runs the gamut from schools in the highest income areas to schools in the lowest income areas, there are no excuses," says Hall.

"While I believe the impact of extreme poverty should not be ignored, I know that we have to address the quality of teaching and learning, since that is the most important variable in this equation."

Parks staff, administrators and partners knew that the students were on board when they witnessed their reaction to a math benchmark test in the spring of 2006. The benchmark test showed that they were far from prepared for the CRCT ("Criterion Referenced Competency Test") math test. At the urging of Hunley (the retired principal brought in as a consultant by the state education department), Waller called an impromptu "community meeting" of the eighth graders in the school hallway.

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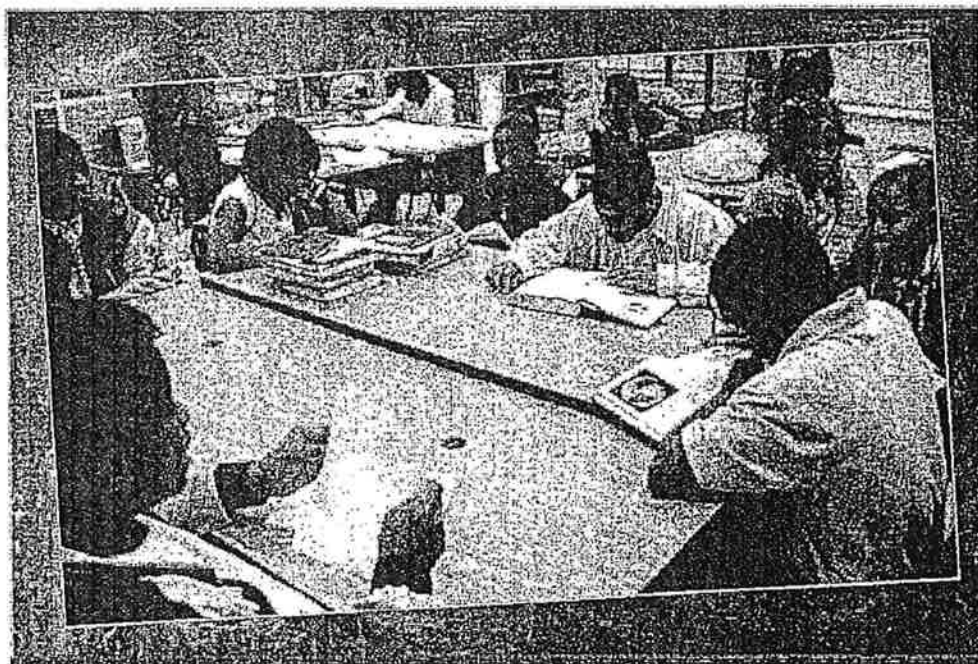
—Damany Lewis

Waller "preached" to them, lighting a competitive fire under them and explaining that the staff would do everything they could to help the students pass the test. Hunley remembers Waller saying, "A lot of folks outside of this school say you can't do it because of where you live, but I know you can do it! I know you are smart. I see you every day and I look at you. I know you can do this."

At that community meeting, the staff and faculty pledged to do whatever was necessary to help the students learn. A voluntary math tutorial class quickly filled to capacity with students sitting on the floor to attend. Weeks later, 40% of those students met the state standards in math while an additional 46% exceeded the standards.

"All children can learn," says Ward, Parks' reading facilitator. "This is what we have been telling our children over and over again. As long as you focus, develop a goal and a dream, you can accomplish it."

Celebration is another critical factor involved in getting the cooperation and buy-in of students and faculty members. The school celebrates at every opportunity, demonstrating to the students that, if they work hard, good things will happen. With the support of partners, including the Salvation Army, Communities In Schools (CIS) and the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the school threw parties to celebrate high attendance rates and academic success. If a



Attendance at Parks has improved dramatically. Before, nearly 20% of students missed at least 15 days. Last year, only one student missed this many days (0.2%).

"All children can learn. This is what we have been telling our children over and over again. As long as you focus, develop a goal and a dream, you can accomplish it."

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student came to school every day in a month, their name went into a drawing and they could win television sets, game systems or bicycles.

"With CIS and the NBA³ (Never Been Absent) Program, we have lots of incentives in place to motivate them to come and to succeed," explains Assistant Principal Reid. "Just being in Parks everyday, you never know what might happen to you.... That gets and holds your attention."

Efforts to encourage student attendance have had a significant effect. Whereas 19.2% of students missed at least 15 school days during the 2003–2004 school year, that number was nearly cut in half the following year (down to 9.9%). Attendance has continued to improve dramatically, with only 2.5% missing at least 15 days in 2005–2006 and only one student (.2%) reaching that threshold during the last school year.

Lewis believes that one reason for the drop in absenteeism is the increased rigor of the class work. Students are given make-up assignments that become increasingly difficult to do when they miss multiple days of school. "If you miss a day, you can get behind; if you miss two or three days, you are lost," explains Lewis. "They come back saying that they don't get it. I say, 'That's good.' If you can miss a day and still get it, I'm not doing my job."

Building Strategic Partnerships and Broad Support

When Waller was hired at Parks, the school had almost no corporate or community partners and only three parents came to meet him at an introductory meeting organized by the school's Parent-Teacher Association.

The Pittsburgh Community Improvement Association (PCIA) had been in partnership with the school, but that partnership had struggled as staff changes at the school and in the organization forced them to repeatedly build new relationships. PCIA had helped the school recruit two business partners, Jones Day Law Firm and Carey Limousines, located near Parks in the Pittsburgh neighborhood. Those businesses had become frustrated because of the changes at the school and a lack of structure to the partnerships.

"There was a consistent effort on the part of PCIA," remembers PCIA's Hoffman, "but the leadership changed so much at Parks that there was not an opportunity to establish a formal structure.... People didn't think their efforts would achieve anything and it was easier to not do anything than to keep trying."

Recognizing a need to recruit additional partners, Waller began to attend meetings of the neighborhood's Ministers' Alliance. There he met several strategic partners, including PCIA's Hoffman and Major Gloria Reagan of

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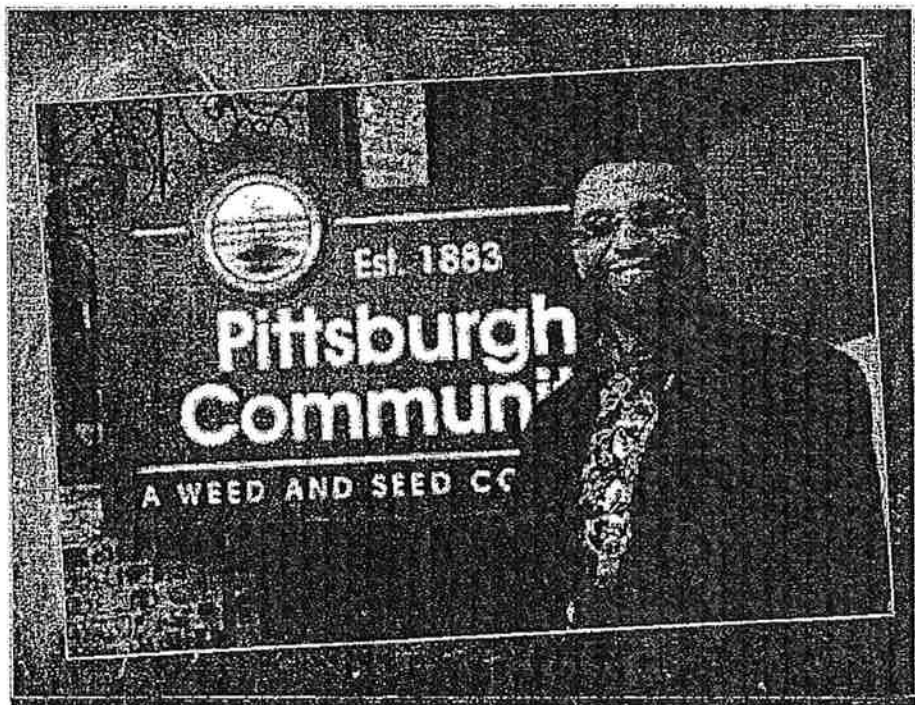
—LaShawn Hoffman

the Salvation Army College of Officer Training, located in the Pittsburgh neighborhood.

His efforts became more successful when the Casey Foundation's Atlanta Civic Site team contacted APS and Parks in an effort to establish a partnership. This occurred after The Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation made an initial commitment to support the redesign of The New Schools at Carver, the high school into which Parks feeds. To date, The Blank Foundation has committed \$4.5 million to fund student support programs for students at The New Schools at Carver as a part of a larger redesign effort.

Leaders at The Blank Foundation prevailed upon Casey to work with Parks to ensure that its students were prepared for the rigor of The New Schools.

"[The Blank Foundation] said they felt that The New Schools at Carver would be more successful if the whole pipeline—the whole feeder system—was successful," explains the Casey Foundation's Atlanta Civic Site Manager, Gail Hayes. "They identified that Parks was a very low performing school. They saw high achieving elementary schools and a failing middle school feeding into The New Schools at Carver, and they knew that student achievement at Parks would have to



Pittsburgh Community Improvement Association's LaShawn Hoffman says that before Christopher Waller became Parks' principal, the leadership had changed so often that "people didn't think their efforts would achieve anything."

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"I did a lot of reading and listening when I first began this work. What I determined—and this is not rocket science—is that the school needed to increase parent involvement and attract more corporate partners. They needed other supports to really increase student achievement."

—Elizabeth Kelly

increase in order for their investment to be successful."

The partnership began with a meeting in the summer of 2005 between Hayes, Principal Waller, SRT 2 Executive Director Pitts, Project GRAD Executive Director Forstall, Casey Senior Associate for Education Bruno Manno and Casey Consultant Elizabeth Kelly. In that meeting, Hayes challenged Waller and his team to set the ambitious goal of achieving Adequate Yearly Progress in the next school year, a goal that Waller and Pitts readily accepted.

Kelly began her work to support Parks by meeting with Waller and other school staff and partners and researching what programs were in place at the school and what opportunities existed for targeted supports.

"I did a lot of reading and listening when I first began this work," explains Kelly. "What I determined—and this is not rocket science—is that the school needed to increase parent involvement and attract more corporate partners. They felt that they were on track to meet AYP that year, but they needed other supports to really increase student achievement."

After Casey began partnering with Parks, Waller's efforts to recruit partners became much easier. "I want to make it clear that Casey brought other partners to the table.... I can focus on the instruction and implementation of the curriculum with integrity.... Prior to Casey, Parks wasn't

invited to the table. Now, when people talk about NPU-V, they are talking about Parks in some component." (NPU-V is the "neighborhood planning unit" that includes Parks Middle School.)

Parks' partners now include After School All Stars, Communities In Schools, Digital Connectors-One Economy, Georgia State University, Hands On Atlanta, Mendez Foundation, the Ministers' Alliance, Music Matters, Pittsburgh Community Improvement Association, Salvation Army College of Officer Training, United Way, Casey Foundation and community associations. While some of these partners joined Parks as a part of Project GRAD, the diversity and scope of partners has greatly increased in recent years.

These partners provide a wide variety of in-kind and financial support. **Salvation Army** supports the Never Been Absent Program, hosts GED and Literacy classes for adults during the evening at Parks, and provides food and materials when requested.

United Way, Georgia State, Casey and **After School All Stars** support the new after-school program launched in October 2006 to provide additional targeted assistance to students who are near the threshold of meeting standards. **Hands On Atlanta** provides tutoring to students in need of additional one-on-one support and has provided computers to students.

The **Casey Foundation** sponsored a staff celebration at Dave and Busters and

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purchased matching maroon blazers for faculty and staff to honor their first year of AYP success. The foundation also purchased planner notebooks for all students and supported professional development and training opportunities for school staff.

Communities In Schools, which is a component of the Project GRAD reform model, provides wrap-around services in the schools to help students address factors that could interfere with their academic achievement, including counseling, small group work with at-risk students, and in-kind resources such as dental check ups and eye exams. They also reach out to parents and caregivers to make them feel more comfortable in the school, helping to organize a Massage for Moms night and a Dinner with Dad night.

Superintendent Hall believes that partnerships and supports for students are a critical component of achieving success in low-income schools. "The impact of extreme poverty should not be ignored," Hall explains. "The supports play a big role. That is why Project GRAD has Communities in Schools. That is why Hands On Atlanta provides tutors and why Casey provides supports to mitigate against other issues.... Most of the schools that are doing well with poor children are schools that have strong partnerships. Those are real contributing factors."

"When you have support," Waller believes, "you don't feel like you are in it by yourself. So many times, Parks felt like it had been in it by itself."

Integrating what is taught in elementary, middle and high schools

The Casey Foundation's support has also helped initiate "Vertical Alignment" efforts to link the curricula between the elementary, middle and high schools. "After talking to the principals at Parks, Gideons and The New Schools at Carver, I was struck by the fact that there was no bridge between the three stages," remembers Kelly. "There was a disconnect between the elementary and middle school curricula and no preparation in middle school for high school."

With funding support from Casey and senior leaders from APS, the Vertical Alignment steering committee began meeting in December 2005. The goal of the group was to develop a rigorous middle school curriculum at Parks that aligns with the academies of The New Schools at Carver and better prepares students upon graduation to be successful in high school.

Work groups—aligned with the four academies at The New Schools at Carver and comprised of staff from Carver, Parks, Project GRAD, SRT 2 and APS—met regularly in 2006, collecting data on current conditions and identifying high-performing teachers, training needs and achievement gaps (between Parks students and The New Schools' requirements).

Funding from the Georgia Department of Human Resources enabled Parks to launch a Summer Youth Program in 2006 to prepare incoming sixth graders for the transition to

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—Dr. Beverly L. Hall

middle school while simultaneously strengthening students' skills and knowledge. Because of the success of the summer program, DHR agreed to continue the funding year-round, enabling Parks to launch its After School All Stars Program in the fall of 2006 and to continue the summer program in 2007.

The Vertical Alignment work at Parks will continue as the model expands to other APS middle schools. "It has become a way of working for Parks and that work will continue," explains Hall. "Now we are beginning to model other schools' efforts around the Parks initiative."

Improving the School's Physical and Social Environment

Principal Waller understood that many of the students attending Parks Middle School might not have a warm home environment where the adults in their lives provided love, support and structure. To ensure that Parks could provide them with a safe and nurturing environment during the school hours, Waller started to address the physical and social environment as soon as he came on staff.

He asked APS to paint the walls and put the school colors and mascot, Mustangs,



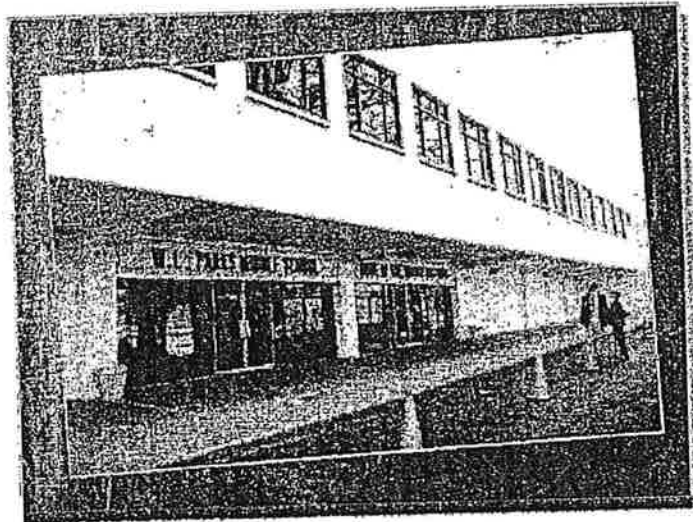
One of Principal Waller's first steps was to improve the look of Parks Middle School. This included a mural at the school's entrance that highlighted the school's colors (red and yellow) and mascot, a mustang. "We wanted the school to have a warm feeling."

"It was really that bad when I first came here. Now the students won't even litter. Now it is offensive to them.... Lately, if someone talks out of turn, I will pause, and the students will chastise them.... They are regulating themselves."

—Damany Lewis

on the wall of the front entrance lobby. He encouraged teachers to post examples of good student work on bulletin boards in the hallways. He purchased pictures, park benches and greenery and placed them throughout the school building.

"We wanted the school to have a warm feeling when you walk in," explains Waller. "Regardless of what cold situation you might have come from, you are here and there is a warm feeling here."



In addition to improving the physical environment, Waller quickly tried to get the social environment under control by increasing discipline. This included the way the students carried themselves in the school. The faculty instituted "Operation Pull and Tuck," requiring all students to have their shirts tucked in and their pants around their waist.

"Discipline had been an issue here, but ... they don't walk the halls anymore," explains Hunley. "They put their shirt tails in their pants. While doing that seems minor, it really changes the way they carry themselves."

Damany Lewis, who began teaching at Parks in the 1999–2000 school year, remembers the challenges that a lack of discipline caused early in his career at Parks. He remembers students urinating in trashcans before tossing them into a classroom and running away. He remembers how there was

no toilet paper in the bathrooms because the students would wet it and throw it onto the ceiling.

"It was really that bad when I first came here," he explains. "Now the students won't even litter. Now it is offensive to them.... Lately, if someone talks out of turn, I will pause, and the students will chastise them.... They are regulating themselves."

"The school environment and how students feel about themselves is important," explains Kweku Forstall. "If they see other students running rampant in the schools with no boundaries, limits and respect for the teachers, they will take it less seriously.... When you beautify the school and enhance the environment, it supports a positive attitude and diminishes distractions to academics."

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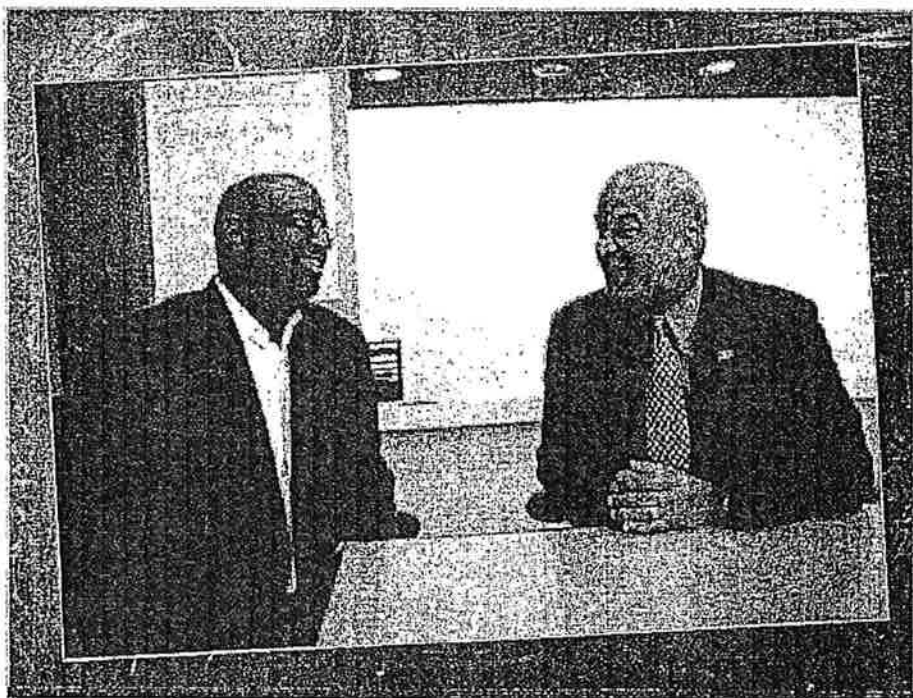
Moving Forward

Having been successful in achieving Adequate Yearly Progress for two straight years, Parks Middle School is no longer defined as a Needs Improvement school under No Child Left Behind. Instead, it is defined as a School of Choice, meaning that parents with children enrolled at struggling schools in the district can elect to send their children to Parks.

This success has led to increased student morale, self-confidence and teacher ownership and commitment, as well as a strong sense of pride across the community. Parks has become a model reform school for the state and for partner agencies.

The school's success did, however, bring some negative financial consequences. Because it is no longer a Needs Improvement school, Parks will lose a significant amount of resources, including:

- \$124,000 from its supplemental budget
- \$450,000 in supplemental educational services
- \$100,000 in Title I funds
- \$75,000 in state consultant/professional development support
- Additional materials, supplies and technology



Project GRAD Executive Director Kweku Forstall (left) and School Reform Team-2 Executive Director Michael Pitts have both played key roles in supporting Parks' young principal.

"We are clearly improving. But we still have a long way to go. We are attacking those [challenges] with great vigor and intentionality with system-wide initiatives. The key lesson here is that it takes a long time to turn around a school system."

—Dr. Beverly L. Hall

Continuing to increase student success while losing these important resources will be a challenge, but Parks' leadership and staff believe they are prepared. Waller continues to set ambitious goals for the school and its students. Not satisfied with merely achieving AYP and APS system targets, Waller is challenging his faculty and students to help the school become a "90-90-90" school, meaning that more than 90% of students meet or exceed standards in Reading, English/Language Arts and Mathematics.

"Now that we have achieved AYP for two years in a row," explains Waller, "AYP is no longer a lofty goal. In order to keep our organization moving forward, we have to continue to increase our targets."

They will be supported in their efforts by an array of new programs and partners that will continue to support student learning in the future. The Parent-Teacher-Student Association has been expanded and revived. New educational partners are working with Parks to ensure that students have the supports and opportunities they need. The Family Literacy Program is providing parents and other area adults with GED and literacy classes, which demonstrate to students the importance of staying focused and staying in school.

The efforts at Parks will also be supported by district-wide reform efforts as Hall and her team work to transform middle and high schools and to improve student achievement and learning in math and science.

"There is still work to be done," explains Hall. "We are clearly improving. But we still have a long way to go in the areas of math and science grades K-12 and in high schools overall. But we are attacking those with great vigor and intentionality with system-wide initiatives. The key lesson here is that it takes a long time to turn around a school system."

"If it can be done anywhere, it can be done right here at Parks," said Principal Waller, shown with a Parks student.



"When I can stand in front of my principals and read the list of highest-performing schools in the district, a list that runs the gamut from schools in the highest income areas to schools in the lowest income areas, there are no excuses."

—Dr. Beverly L. Hall

The Diarist Project

This is one of a series of publications about the Annie E. Casey Foundation's work in low-income neighborhoods put together by The Diarist Project. The project is a new approach the foundation is using to learn from its efforts to strengthen families and transform struggling neighborhoods.

Diarists work to capture strategies and insights of the people who are leading the neighborhood transformation work.

This story was written by Sarah Torian, the Atlanta Civic Site diarist. It was edited by Tim Saasta, diarist coordinator. Photos ©2007 by Stanley Leary. Published in December 2007.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation works to build better futures for disadvantaged children and their families in the United States. Its primary mission is to foster public policies, human service reforms and community supports that more effectively meet the needs of today's vulnerable children and families.

Atlanta is one of three Casey Foundation civic sites, which are cities where the foundation has "home-town" ties. Atlanta is the headquarters of UPS. The Casey Foundation was started by the founder of UPS, Jim Casey, and his siblings. (The other two Civic Sites are Baltimore, MD, and New Haven, CN.)

The Atlanta Civic Site focuses on five of Atlanta's oldest neighborhoods, all located just south of downtown. These neighborhoods—Adair Park, Mechanicsville, Peoplestown, Pittsburgh and Summerhill/Capitol Homes—comprise a once-thriving African-American community that has experienced a great deal of property disinvestment, population decrease and general economic decline over the past 30 years.

To help strengthen families in these neighborhoods, the foundation has been promoting neighborhood-scale programs, policies and activities that contribute to strong, family-supporting neighborhoods. These efforts focus on education achievement, family economic success and neighborhood transformation.

For more information, contact: The Atlanta Civic Site, 477 Windsor Street, SW, Atlanta, GA 30312; www.atlantacivicsite.org; 404-222-3660.

For more information about The Diarist Project, contact Tim Saasta at Tim@CharityChoices.com. Diarist publications are available at www.DiaristProject.org.



A Parks Middle School Student

VENETIAN HILLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

1910 Venetian Drive, SW
Atlanta, Georgia 30311

Principal: Clarietta Davis
Testing Coordinator: Milagros Moner

SRT-4 Executive Director: Tamara Cotman

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Venetian Hills Elementary in 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009. Five teachers and the testing coordinator at Venetian Hills confessed to erasing answers. Cheating at Venetian Hills is evidenced by the high number of flagged classrooms, confessions, witness testimony, and Principal Clarietta Davis' refusal to answer our questions about cheating.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	75.4	1.5
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	52	1
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	19(18)	1(0)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	12.8	3
High Flagged Standard Deviation	24.5	3
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.8	3

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Narrative

The following teachers altered test documents at Venetian Hills Elementary School: Jacquelyn Parks, Melba Smith, Alma Keen, Angela Bennett, Tyrone Hankerson, Hardy Scott, and Milagros Moner. A group of teachers got together in Testing Coordinator Milagros Moner's office in the afternoons. The teachers met in that office, locked the door, and erased wrong answers, filling in right answers. Principal Davis had the teachers raise Level 1 (not meeting expectations) students up to Level 2 (meeting expectations) and raise Level 2 students up to Level 3 (exceeding expectations). Some teachers changed the tests in the morning when Moner handed them out, while others changed the answer sheets in their classroom after the test. The trusted "chosen ones" changed the tests in the afternoon.

Principal Davis altered answer sheets as well. She only erased in the presence of Milagros Moner. Principal Davis erased answer sheets in her office wearing gloves so that she did not leave fingerprints on the test documents.

B. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Jacquelyn Parks (Teacher)

Jacquelyn Parks taught third grade at Venetian Hills and confessed to cheating in 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009. Testing Coordinator Milagros Moner had a special group of people—"the chosen ones." These teachers were either part of the leadership team or were "veteran" Venetian Hills teachers. Moner did not ask new teachers to cheat.

The group got together in Moner's office each afternoon during the testing period. The "chosen ones" were Melba Smith, Alma Keen, Angela Bennett, Tyrone Hankerson, Hardy Scott, Jacquelyn Parks, and Milagros Moner. They met in the windowless office and locked the door. They took the test themselves and changed the answer sheets when the student's answer was wrong. They would change the tests of only the grade they taught, but not just their own students. Some teachers changed the tests each morning in their classrooms. The "chosen ones" would change the tests in the afternoons and during the makeup testing days. Parks believes that the teachers that were not directly involved knew what was going on. There were other teachers changing test answers in their own classrooms.

Moner told the teachers that Principal Davis's instructions were to pull Level 1 students up to Level 2 and pull Level 2 students up to Level 3. When one of the group remarked, "Why isn't Ms. Davis in here helping us?" Moner responded, "She does help, she puts on her gloves."

One of teacher Nichole Jones' fifth grade students noticed that the answers on his test from the day before were not as he indicated. He thought his answers had been changed and told Ms. Jones. Jones later asked Hankerson, "What is going on around here?"

Parks first cheated in 2004 but believes cheating was going on at Venetian Hills prior to that. She heard cheating has been going on since Dr. Hall became the Superintendent. The

culture at APS is that if you are not a “team player,” there are ways that APS can get back at you. Parks was afraid of retaliation if she did not go along with cheating. “APS is run like the mob.”

2. Tyrone Hankerson (Teacher)

Tyrone Hankerson taught fourth grade and admitted to his involvement with cheating in 2009. ILS Milagros Moner told Hankerson that they needed to “clean up” the tests. He knew that “clean up the tests” meant to change answers from wrong to right on the CRCT. Hankerson told Moner he was not interested and Moner responded that Principal Davis wanted him to cheat. Moner kept asking and eventually Hankerson said that he might help. He went to Moner’s office and Jacquelyn Parks, Karen Batiste, Milagros Moner, and Alma Keen were there with the tests. He saw them change answers but says he did not assist.

Other teachers at the school knew what was going on. Leslie Badger called him once and said that she knew they were changing CRCT answers in Moner’s office.

3. Milagros Moner (Testing Coordinator)

Milagros Moner was the Instructional Liaison Specialist in 2009 and was considered the “Assistant Principal” by many teachers and staff at the school. She was also the testing coordinator in 2009 and says she cheated in 2008 and 2009.

In 2008, during the week of testing, Principal Davis asked Moner to “check the tests to see how the students [are] doing.” Moner looked at some of the tests and told Davis that the students were not doing well. Davis told her to get others to help her “look over the tests.” She also directed Moner to bring some tests to her office. Moner recruited others over the course of a day. She asked Alma Keen, Tyrone Hankerson, Hardy Scott, Jacquelyn Parks, and Melba Smith because those teachers had been at Venetian Hills long enough to understand the culture of “do not tell.” Dr. Angela Bennett was in the room but Moner does not recall if Bennett erased answers. Moner put tests in tote bags and took them to Principal Davis’ office. Davis was concerned about leaving fingerprints so she put on gloves to erase answers. Moner helped Principal Davis change answers in her office. Just the two of them were present.

Principal Davis pressured the teachers to get CRCT scores up. She constantly threatened teachers with PDPs for low test scores. Everybody knows that being on a PDP means their jobs are in jeopardy. Principal Davis was a tyrant and the culture at Venetian Hills was basically “rule by fear.” Moner said, “Teachers are afraid of losing their jobs and teachers compel themselves to do whatever they need to do to make sure that they do not lose their jobs because their students don’t meet or don’t exceed on the CRCT. Everybody was in fear. It is not that the teachers are bad people and want to do it, it is that they are scared.”

SRT Executive Director Dr. Davis-Williams liked Principal Davis because she won lots of awards and made Dr. Davis-Williams look good. Furthermore, Dr. Davis-Williams had a style similar to Principal Davis. Neither were approachable. Teachers did not feel they could complain about their principal to Dr. Davis-Williams.

4. Melba Smith (Teacher)

Melba Smith taught fourth grade in 2009 and admitted to changing answers on tests in 2008 and 2009. In 2008, Milagros Moner asked Smith if she could stay after school and “look over the tests.” She suspected that Moner was asking her to stay after school to change answers and thought someone at Venetian Hills was cheating. She noticed over the years that some students could not read at their grade level but received high CRCT scores.

Principal Davis told Moner to change the tests. Smith changed answers each afternoon with Tyrone Hankerson, Alma Keen, Jacquelyn Parks, and Angela Bennett. Moner stayed in her office and helped the others. Hardy Scott was changing the tests, but alone in his classroom. Teachers Karen Batiste and Wendy Howard gave their students their answers while administering the test in their classrooms.

Smith told students to review a question when she saw they had marked an incorrect answer. Smith cheated because if the teachers did not have good test scores, the principal “would ride [their] back until [they] left.”

5. Hardy Scott (Teacher)

Hardy Scott admitted to cheating in 2009 and in several years prior. At the end of the testing day he would get his tests from Moner and would take them back to his classroom, shut the door, and change the answers.

6. Dr. Angela Bennett (Teacher)

Angela Bennett confessed to being in the room with the tests and pretending to change answers in 2009. Moner directed her to help change answers. Bennett believed she had to agree to change answers. She did not want to do it, so she sat in the room and pretended to erase answers. She said that Principal Davis knew what they were doing. Hankerson, Keen, Moner, and Parks were also in Moner’s office changing answers.

The teachers used answer keys to change the answers.

C. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

I. Dr. Clarietta Davis (Principal)

Principal Davis refused to answer our questions, by asserting her Fifth Amendment right not to incriminate herself. A list of the questions she refused to answer is included as **Attachment A**.

We monitored a conversation between a school official and Principal Davis. In this conversation Davis is told that the Governor’s investigator knew what happened at Venetian Hills. Davis did not deny that she cheated; instead, she acted surprised that anyone knew what happened. Principal Davis said that they were talking about too much and concluded the conversation.

In a meeting, one of the “chosen ones” told Davis that the Governor’s investigator “knows everything.” She specifically mentioned that Hardy Scott took tests home: “I don’t know how he [Governor’s investigator] knew that . . . It’s like he [Governor’s investigator] was in the room.” Davis did not question the teacher’s statement; instead, she asked, “What did the employees [at Venetian Hills] say?”

When the school official told Principal Davis that the investigators appeared to be “more interested in principals than in teachers,” Davis responded, “That must be why they’re waiting to interview me last.” The official told Principal Davis, “I am thinking about telling him what happened in that room because I am scared.” Davis asked, “So you gonna call the others’ [teachers involved in changing answers] names?”

The official continued to talk about how scared he/she was of criminal prosecution when Principal Davis said, “I still think this is all gonna come back to me.” The official said to Principal Davis that the Governor’s investigator talked to the interim principal Mrs. Robinson several times. Davis responded, “Mrs. Robinson doesn’t know anything.”

2. Karen Batiste (Teacher)

Karen Batiste denied cheating but said that she knew it was going on.

Batiste heard that there was a recording of Melba Smith giving her students the questions on the fifth grade writing test. Smith told her students they were questions that would appear on the test the next week.

Principal Davis told the teachers that they were not allowed to give children a failing grade. Batiste said Davis is the “meanest person you’ve ever met.” It is not fun being a teacher because it is all about the test. “Everything is about the test.” “I am glad [Governor Perdue’s] not letting go though . . . I’m glad he’s not letting go, because if [cheating] doesn’t stop now it’s going to continue.” “The school system, I don’t think they want to get to the bottom of this.”

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

We conclude that Principal Clarietta Davis cheated, and directed others to cheat, on the CRCT from 2004 to 2009. Six teachers admitted that they altered test documents, or were in the room when others were altering test documents, and that Davis directly, or indirectly, ordered them to cheat. Davis erased answers, wearing gloves, in her office. We have listened to monitored conversations with Principal Davis. She does not deny her involvement. Finally, Principal Davis refused to answer our questions, asserting her Fifth Amendment right not to incriminate herself.

Milagros Moner, the testing coordinator, cheated on the CRCT at the direction of Principal Davis. She recruited trusted and veteran teachers to assist. Jacquelyn Parks, Tyrone Hankerson, Melba Smith, Hardy Scott, Alma Keen, and Angela Bennett cheated on the 2009 CRCT, and in other years. They changed tests for the entire school. Most teachers were aware of the cheating.

We further conclude that Principal Davis failed in her ultimate responsibility for testing activities and for ensuring the ethical administration of, and proper security for, the 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009 CRCT. It is our conclusion, from the statistical data and the other evidence secured in this investigation, that Principal Davis failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT and adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and she is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

CLARIETTA DAVIS

You have information concerning cheating at your school on the 2009 CRCT test, don't you?

You are refusing to provide these investigators with that information, aren't you?

By cheating on the 2009 CRCT, you denied struggling students the help they needed to succeed?

You directed school employees to cheat on the 2009 CRCT, didn't you?

You coordinated cheating on the 2009 CRCT at your school, didn't you?

You facilitated the ability of school employees to cheat on the 2009 CRCT test, right?

You knew that school employees were cheating on the 2009 CRCT, didn't you?

You provided school employees with access to the student's CRCT tests so that these school employees could cheat?

You knew that teachers were providing student's with answers to the 2009 CRCT, didn't you?

You changed student's answers on the 2009 CRCT test, didn't you?

You did not report violations of testing protocol as you were required to do by Georgia law, did you?

In 2009, you were entrusted with ensuring that school employees act ethically?

Cheating is unethical isn't it?

You instructed your teachers to cheat on the 2009 CRCT didn't you?

You pressured your teachers to cheat on the 2009 CRCT didn't you?

You accepted bonus money from APS based on test scores you knew to be false?

Your school accepted federal money based in part on test scores you knew to be false?

By cheating on the CRCT you denied the State of Georgia an accurate assessment of your student's academic performance?

By cheating on the CRCT you denied the parents of your students an accurate assessment of their children's academic performance, didn't you?

By cheating on the CRCT, you denied the children in your care an accurate assessment of their own academic performance.

GIDEONS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

897 Welch Street
Atlanta, Georgia 30310

Principal: Armstead Salters
Testing Coordinator: Sheridan Rogers

SRT-2 Executive Director: Michael Pitts

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Gideons Elementary in 2009 and in other years. Sixty people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Twelve people confessed to cheating. Cheating at Gideons is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms, confessions, and witness testimony. Principal Armstead Salters confessed to knowing of cheating at Gideons. Testing Coordinator Sheridan Rogers confessed to cheating. Both Principal Salters and Testing Coordinator Rogers instructed witnesses to obstruct our investigation by directing them not to tell the truth in interviews.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	88.4	25.0
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	61	18
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	21(21)	11(5)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	15.2	4.9
High Flagged Standard Deviation	53.2	8.3
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.4	3.0

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Narrative

Since 2001, Principal Salters, Testing Coordinator Sheridan Rogers, and numerous teachers participated in a coordinated, school-wide cheating scheme. Principal Salters instructed certain teachers to see Rogers to change students' CRCT answer sheets. Rogers provided teachers with the students' CRCT answer sheets, the test booklets and answer key transparencies so the students' answers could be changed. Rogers instructed teachers to prepare answer keys on transparencies for the different versions of the CRCT. Teachers prepared the answer keys by taking the tests themselves and marking correct answers on transparency sheets. Teachers returned the completed answer keys to Rogers who distributed the answer keys and the students' CRCT answer sheets to other teachers. Teachers also prompted their students to change answers during the administration of the test.

Veteran teachers understood that changing students' CRCT answer sheets was expected at Gideons. They changed the answer sheets of the students taught by newer teachers until the new teacher was trusted to be brought into the cheating scheme. When they decided a new teacher was ready, veteran teachers instructed them to "go see Ms. Rogers and check your tests."

Not all teachers, veteran or new, participated in the cheating, but the scheme was an open secret at Gideons Elementary.

One group of teachers took their students' answer sheets to the home of a teacher and held a "changing party" over the weekend in Douglas County, Georgia. Other teachers changed their students' answer sheets after hours at school during the testing window.

Principal Salters obstructed this investigation when he instructed teachers not to cooperate. He said to them, "If anyone asks you anything about this just tell them you don't know. You did not. Stick with it." Principal Salters also told teachers to "just stick to the story and it will all go away." Sheridan Rogers told at least one teacher to not say anything to investigators about CRCT cheating.

B. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Oliver Banks (Teacher)

Oliver Banks admitted to changing answers on the 2008 and 2009 CRCT.

Principal Salters instructed Banks and other teachers to change answers on the 2008 and 2009 CRCT. Banks erased and changed answers in 2008 at Gideons with Bernadine Macon, Daisey Bowser, and Veronica Jordan. He also erased and changed answers on the 2009 CRCT at Bernadine Macon's home in Douglas County, Georgia over a weekend along with Macon, Bowser, Jordan, and Michael Walker.

Principal Salters saw Bowser, Jordan, Macon, and Banks erasing and changing answers at Gideons. Principal Salters asked Banks, "How is everything going?" He was referring to erasing and changing answers.

Principal Salters told Banks, Jordan, Macon, and Bowser, "If anyone asks you anything about this just tell them you don't know. You did not. Stick with it." He also said, "just stick to the story and it will all go away." Banks told Salters that he could not lie to the GBI. Salters replied, "They don't know anything about this. They are searchin'. Stick to the fact that y'all did not make any changes."

2. Daisey Bowser (Teacher)

Daisey Bowser admitted to changing answers on the 2009 CRCT. Sheridan Rogers gave Bowser CRCT test booklets, students' answer sheets and transparency answer keys. Using the materials provided by Rogers, Bowser erased and changed 2009 CRCT answer sheets at Macon's house with Jordan, Walker, and Banks.

3. Veronica Jordan (Teacher)

Veronica Jordan admitted to changing answers on the 2008 and 2009 CRCT.

Jordan testified that Principal Salters instructed teachers to report to Rogers to "check their tests," which was code for erasing answers. When teachers reported to Rogers, she gave

teachers CRCT answer sheets and answer keys to change the answers. Rogers instructed Jordan to prepare an “answer key” to one version of the CRCT by marking the correct answers on a blank transparency.

Jordan erased and changed CRCT answers in Rogers’ office in full view of Rogers. She also admitted to changing CRCT answers at Macon’s house along with Macon, Banks, and Walker.

Jordan testified that fourth grade teachers at Gideons also changed answers but could not provide details. Sheridan Rogers instructed Jordan not to say anything to investigators about CRCT cheating.

4. Bernadine Macon (Teacher)

Bernadine Macon admitted to changing CRCT answers at her home in Douglas County, Georgia and at the school.

Walker, Bowser, Banks, and Jordan all went to Macon’s home over a weekend and changed CRCT answers using answer sheet transparencies provided by Rogers. Macon also testified that Principal Salters called during this investigation to tell her to “hang in there” and that she would be “ok because she didn’t do anything.”

5. Michael Walker (Paraprofessional)

Michael Walker admitted to erasing and changing CRCT answers in 2009. Walker admitted to driving Banks to Macon’s house to change CRCT answers with Jordan, Macon, and Bowser.

6. Tremelia Donaldson (Teacher)

Tremelia Donaldson admitted to cheating on the 2009 CRCT. Principal Salters told her, “Do what you need to do. The kids have to pass.” Donaldson also testified that teachers at Gideons have erased and changed answers since 2001. She learned of the cheating conspiracy when Denethia Weddington-Ward told Donaldson “go see Rogers to check your tests.” This was code for erasing and changing answers. When she “went to see” Rogers, Rogers gave her CRCT test booklets, students’ answer sheets, and nineteen transparency answer keys, one for each test form. The transparencies consisted of clear sheets of plastic normally used for overhead projectors, with the correct answers to the 2009 CRCT written on them in marker. Donaldson used these materials provided by Rogers to erase and change students’ answer sheets in her classroom at Gideons after school.

7. Denethia Weddington-Ward (Teacher)

Denethia Weddington-Ward admitted to erasing and changing students’ answer sheets, both those of her students and those of other teachers.

Weddington-Ward told LaTonya Washington to “go get her tests and answer sheets” from Rogers to erase and change answer sheets. She believes Washington did so. Rogers gave

Weddington-Ward both her own and other teachers' students' test booklets, answer sheets, and transparencies with the correct answers to use in erasing and changing answer sheets.

We monitored a telephone call between Weddington-Ward and Rogers where Rogers admitted to giving answer sheets to teachers, but denied knowing what the teachers did with them. When asked about the current location of the answer sheet transparencies and whether she destroyed them, Rogers said she "got rid of them," and that she "could legitimize them as teaching aides."

8. Cheryl Hunt (Teacher)

Cheryl Hunt admitted to erasing and changing answers in Rogers' office and in her own classroom in 2009, and in other years. Rogers gave Hunt test booklets and students' answer sheets, as well as transparencies with answers to the CRCT. Hunt stated that Donaldson, Weddington-Ward, Washington and Neely changed CRCT answers.

9. Irene Ellerbe (Teacher)

Irene Ellerbe admitted to prompting students to change their answers during the CRCT. Irene Ellerbe asked students "are you sure this is what you want to put down?" multiple times. In response to her prompting, students erased their answers and changed them to the correct answer.

C. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Sheridan Rogers (Testing Coordinator)

Rogers admitted to giving test booklets and answer sheets to teachers after Principal Salters instructed her to do so. She denied any knowledge of answer key transparencies but stated that blank transparencies were used as teaching aides. Multiple teachers testified that they received answer keys from Rogers.

On February 22, 2011, we monitored a phone call between Rogers and Denethia Weddington-Ward. During this call, Weddington-Ward brought up the transparencies by asking Rogers what she did with them and informing Rogers that investigators were aware of the transparencies. Rogers responded by saying that she got rid of the transparencies and that she could "[l]egitimize those as teaching aides."

2. Camille Neely (Teacher)

Camille Neely stated that Rogers gave her answer sheet transparencies, but she did not use them because her students did well on the CRCT in 2009. All of Neely's classes were flagged with standard deviations from the state-wide norms being 9.6 for reading, 5.7 for language arts and 3.4 for math. She was unable to explain why her students would have been so far above the state-wide norms for wrong-to-right erasures.

3. Armstead Salters (Principal)

Principal Salters admitted to knowing that Rogers and teachers at Gideons cheated on the CRCT. He did nothing to stop it. He denied directing Sheridan Rogers, or any teacher, to cheat. He also denied instructing his teachers not to cooperate with this investigation. Salters acknowledged that Gideons was his school and that he was responsible for the cheating that went on there. He denied his involvement in cheating, except to the extent he knew it was occurring.

Principal Salters testified that he never told SRT-2 Executive Director Michael Pitts or Dr. Beverly Hall that teachers at Gideons cheated. Principal Salters testified that although he met with Dr. Hall after the Blue Ribbon Commission Report was issued, Hall never asked him if teachers at Gideons cheated.

Principal Salters met with Pitts in December of 2008 to tell him that he intended to retire. SRT-3 Executive Director Pitts told him that “a scandal was brewing,” and requested he put off his retirement until after the scandal. Principal Salters agreed.

4. LaTonya Washington (Teacher)

LaTonya Washington testified that she received answer sheets and transparencies from Sheridan Rogers, but did not use them to erase students’ answers. She stated that her students did well on the 2009 CRCT and she did not need to cheat. None of Washington’s classes were flagged by GOSA for abnormally high wrong-to-right erasures.

D. Testimony of Additional Witnesses

1. Dr. Beverly Hall (Superintendent)

When Dr. Hall met with Principal Salters after the Blue Ribbon Commission Report she asked him if cheating occurred at Gideons, and he replied “I don’t know,” instead of denying cheating occurred. When we interviewed Dr. Hall, she said that she did not believe teachers in APS cheated, but that she “sure would like to know what happened at Gideons.”

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

We conclude a school-wide conspiracy to erase and change students CRCT answer sheets occurred at Gideons in 2008, 2009, and other years. We conclude that Principal Salters and Sheridan Rogers orchestrated this school-wide effort to erase and change students’ answer sheets and ordered teachers to lie to the GBI. We conclude that Irene Ellerbe cheated on the 2009 CRCT test. We conclude that third grade teachers Tremelia Donaldson, Cheryl Hunt, Camille Neely, and Denethia Weddington-Ward erased and changed students’ CRCT answer sheets at the school in 2008 and 2009. We further conclude that fifth grade teachers Oliver Banks, Daisey Bowser, Bernadine Macon, Veronica Jordan and Michael Walker erased and changed students’ CRCT answer sheets at the school in 2008, and at Macon’s house in Douglas County in 2009.

Based on the statistical evidence and the evidence we have found at schools with similar statistical data, we believe that the teachers in other grade levels also cheated, but we lack sufficient evidence to determine which additional teachers cheated.

It is also our conclusion, from the statistical data and the other evidence that Principal Armstead Salters failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT, and adequately supervise testing and test security. This resulted in, and he is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

KENNEDY MIDDLE SCHOOL

225 Griffin St. NW
Atlanta, GA 30314-3917

Principal: Dr. Lucious Brown
Testing Coordinator: Tanya Green

SRT-1 Executive Director: Dr. Sharon Davis-Williams

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Kennedy Middle in 2009. Fifty people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. One person confessed to cheating on the 2009 CRCT. Cheating at Kennedy is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms, a confession and witness testimony. Principal Brown answered all questions asked of him during his first interview, but then refused to answer our questions in his second interview by asserting his Fifth Amendment rights. Principal Brown failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

A. 2009 vs. 2010

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	53.2	6
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	42	5
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	22(13)	4(1)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	7.8	3.6
High Flagged Standard Deviation	25.8	3.9
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.1	3

B. Flagged Classrooms

Teacher	Grade & Test	Standard Deviation
BROWN	6 RD	5.089088174
BROWN	6 MA	5.117179761
CHAMPION	6 RD	15.04780325
CHAMPION	6 LA	5.546467781
CHAMPION	6 MA	8.753403409
CURRAN	6 RD	7.324830923
JEFFERSON	6 RD	15.32740273
JEFFERSON	6 LA	4.929384429
JOHNSON	6 RD	10.1809325
JOHNSON	6 LA	6.309160842
JOHNSON	6 MA	7.421849417
MCEACHERN	6 RD	9.344362535
MCEACHERN	6 LA	8.097544447
MCEACHERN	6 MA	5.277854699
P JACKSON	6 RD	11.240114
P JACKSON	6 LA	6.094625784
P JACKSON	6 MA	8.104675596
WILLIS	6 RD	7.793203967
WILLIS	6 MA	3.071301497
ALEXANDER	7 RD	4.89332047
ALEXANDER	7 LA	3.806064018
ALEXANDER	7 MA	19.64457009
EDWARDS	7 MA	25.76111746
KIEL	7 MA	5.31374061
MACK	7 RD	10.07194437
MACK	7 LA	11.40441189
MACK	7 MA	12.40487778
PARKER	7 LA	3.676303193
PARKER	7 MA	7.375069176
CRAWFORD	8 MA	3.505275347
DAVIS	8 MA	3.53922506
EASTERLING	8 RD	9.535627614
EASTERLING	8 MA	7.788329721
ELLIS	8 MA	7.774976862
EVANS	8 RD	3.231092674
EVANS	8 MA	4.527173489
LANDRUM	8 MA	7.400048393
LOVETT	8 MA	4.386037999
RAGLAND	8 MA	4.582951024
VINCENT	8 RD	4.805024492
VINCENT	8 LA	3.819640899
VINCENT	8 MA	6.880745321

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Overview

There are several facts which point to the conclusion that Kennedy Middle School was not managed to ensure that the 2009 CRCT results were accurately reported.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 53.2% for the 2009 CRCT. With state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped significantly from 53.2% to 6%.

Second, of the approximately 1,800 non-APS schools in the state taking the 2009 CRCT, only four schools had a higher percentage of flagged classrooms than Kennedy Middle School.

Third, of the 42 flagged classrooms at Kennedy 29 (69% of the total) had standard deviations that exceeded five, and nine classrooms exceeded ten standard deviations. At five standard deviations, the probability that the number of wrong-to-right erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard deviations the probability is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations from the state mean were, for a number of classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at Kennedy Middle School.

Fourth is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures, 85.1% were produced by the flagged classrooms which account for only 53.2% of total classrooms in the school.

Fifth, Principal Lucious Brown directed and participated in an organized scheme to erase and change students' test answer documents. When he was subpoenaed by us, he refused to answer questions about his knowledge of, or participation in, cheating and asserted his Fifth Amendment rights.

Finally, Principal Brown intimidated witnesses in this investigation by requiring the teachers and staff at Kennedy Middle School to meet with his personal criminal defense attorney at school, during school hours.

B. Narrative

In 2009, Principal Lucious Brown, School Improvement Specialist Dr. Tameka Goodson, Secretary Carol Dennis, and Barbara McDaniel participated in a coordinated cheating scheme. These women moved from West Fulton with Principal Brown when he became Principal at Kennedy in 2007. Brown directed these individuals to check the students' tests and "make them right" so that the school could meet targets. Although no evidence exists that Principal Brown personally erased answers, he was present when Dennis, Goodson and McDaniel carried out his directive. Moreover, one witness observed Principal Brown carrying tests from the vault to the conference room after the test period ended for the day. After testing ended, Principal Brown, Dennis, Goodson and Barbara McDaniel carried the tests from the "vault" into the conference room or Principal Brown's office and changed student answers on the test. Only Principal Brown and his secretary, Carol Dennis, had keys to the vault where the tests were stored.

C. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Barbara McDaniel (Teacher)

Following the first or second day of the administration of the CRCT in 2009, Carol Dennis, Principal Brown's secretary, summoned Barbara McDaniel and Dr. Tameka Goodson to the conference room where Dr. Brown and Ms. Dennis were located. Dennis asked McDaniel and Goodson to stay until 4:00 or 5:00 and help change CRCT answer sheets. Dennis explained that a certain percentage of the tests needed to be "checked" and made right. McDaniel told them she would have to think about it because she knew what they were doing was wrong.

McDaniel described Principal Brown as “like a son to her.” She wanted to talk with her husband about what she was asked to do, but knew he would tell her not to cheat. She wanted to help Principal Brown. She did not ask her husband.

On the third or fourth day of testing, after the students left school, Dennis, Goodson and McDaniel stayed at school until approximately 11:00 p.m. to finish changing answers. Principal Brown was in the room while the others changed answers. McDaniel was ashamed of what they had done.

2. Michelle Hayes (Teacher)

Michelle Hayes stated that she had no direct knowledge of cheating. However, she noted that students who could not read would often meet or exceed expectations on the reading portion of the CRCT. Hayes confronted Principal Brown about this discrepancy in June 2009, but he did not give her any explanation. In the fall of 2009, Principal Brown suddenly transferred Hayes to Brown Middle School.

3. Tiffany Edwards (Teacher)

Tiffany Edwards heard there was cheating at Kennedy and that Principal Brown and his friends were involved. Teachers talked about the unrealistic jump in math scores. Edwards heard students talking about teachers giving answers. She does not recall the students' names. Some teachers complained that their answer sheets were returned to them in a different order than the teacher left them the day before.

4. Michelle Bowman (Teacher)

Principal Brown ordered teachers to meet with his personal criminal defense attorney in his office at the school during school hours.

5. Francesca Favors (Office Clerk)

Francesca Favors stated that during the 2009 CRCT, Tanya Green, the Testing Coordinator, returned tests to the vault and locked the door. However, Favors observed Dennis, Principal Brown, Dr. Goodson and Morris going in and out of the vault during the day. Only Principal Brown and Dennis kept a key to the locked room.

6. Tanya Green (Testing Coordinator)

Tanya Green denied cheating. She did not have a key to the vault where tests were stored. Only Principal Brown and Dennis kept that key.

7. Matthew Hall (Teacher)

Matthew Hall reported that during test week, Principal Brown ordered everyone to leave the school by 4:00 p.m. and cancelled after-school activities.

8. Margo Morris (Attendance Clerk)

Margo Morris stated that during the 2009 CRCT, Dennis pulled her into her office and asked Morris to sharpen the pencils. At that time, Morris saw Principal Brown, Barbara McDaniel, Dr. Goodson and Dennis in the conference room. Morris heard Ms. Favors say “y’all think I’m stupid. I know y’all are back there with those tests.”

9. Rosalin Triplett (Teacher)

During the 2009 CRCT, Triplett’s students raised their hands and reported that their answers from the previous day had been changed. She reported this to Tanya Green who told Principal Brown. Finley, another teacher, told Triplett that everything in her test containers was in disarray when she got it back. Triplett witnessed a confrontation between Principal Brown and teacher Michelle Hayes. Hayes asked Principal Brown how some of her students could have passed the CRCT. Principal Brown said “I’m not going to talk about it.” Triplett believes Principal Brown subsequently fired Hayes. Triplett reported that while the GBI was at the school, Margo Morris was moved from the front office and into a hallway. Triplett overheard a group of students say that their teacher, Willis, helped them on the test.

10. Robin Banks (Teacher)

During the 2008 CRCT, Ms. Robin Banks went to pick up her tests from the testing coordinator one morning toward the middle of the test week. She noticed that one of her test answer booklets was missing, so she went to report it to Dr. Brown. When she got back to the room where the tests were stored, the book was sitting beside the box. Dr. Brown wanted her to believe it was just an oversight on her part.

D. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Dr. Lucious Brown (Principal)

When confronted with evidence of his involvement in changing answers, Principal Lucious Brown denied cheating. When he was subpoenaed for an additional interview, he refused to answer questions about his participation in, or knowledge of, cheating and asserted his Fifth Amendment right not to incriminate himself.

2. Carol Dennis (Secretary)

Carol Dennis denied participating in, or having any knowledge of, cheating.

3. Dr. Tameka Goodson (Instructional Coach)

Dr. Tameka Goodson denied any participation in or knowledge of cheating. The GBI confronted Ms. Goodson with evidence of her involvement in cheating and advised her that lying to a law enforcement agent was a felony, but if she told the truth she would be offered immunity. Goodson said she wanted to “make a statement,” but wanted an attorney present. Goodson was given that opportunity, but failed to return with her attorney. The Special Investigators ultimately served Ms. Goodson with another subpoena. Despite her previous representation that

she would like to give a statement to the GBI, during her interview with the Special Investigators, with her attorney present, Ms. Goodson denied any involvement in or knowledge of cheating.

E. Other Evidence

- In 2006-2007, the State placed Kennedy Middle on a “Needs Improvement” list for repeated failure to meet AYP.
- In 2007-2008, Principal Lucious Brown’s first year at Kennedy, math scores jumped in every grade and Kennedy not only made AYP, but met 83% of its targets.
- In 2008-2009, the state removed Kennedy from the Needs Improvement list.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

We conclude that Principal Lucious Brown, Dr. Tameka Goodson, Carol Dennis and Barbara McDaniel conspired to erase and change student answer sheets on the 2009 CRCT.

We further conclude that Principal Brown failed in his ultimate responsibility for testing activities and for ensuring the ethical administration of, and proper security for, the 2009 CRCT. It is our conclusion, from the statistical data and the other evidence secured in this investigation, that Principal Brown failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT and adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and he is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

F.L. STANTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

1625 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive
Atlanta, Georgia 30314-2207

Principal: Dr. Marlo Barber
Testing Coordinator: Arthurline Taylor

SRT-4 Executive Director: Tamara Cotman

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at F.L. Stanton Elementary in 2009. Twenty-two people were interviewed at F.L. Stanton, some more than once. One teacher confessed to cheating. Cheating at F.L. Stanton is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms, a confession, witness testimony, and Principal Marlo Barber's refusal to answer questions about cheating. Principal Barber failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

A. 2009 vs. 2010

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	83.3	7.1
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	35	3
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	13(12)	3(0)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	12.1	5.2
High Flagged Standard Deviation	24.4	7.4
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3	3.4

B. Flagged Classrooms

Teacher	Grade & Test	Standard Deviation
FOSTER	1 RD	6.286587288
HILL	1 RD	7.500066144
HILL	1 LA	10.44392629
HILL	1 MA	8.66682616
DURR	2 RD	5.41699529
DURR	2 LA	5.552714374
DURR	2 MA	4.387625289
GOSHA	2 LA	3.047853543
GOSHA	2 MA	7.146005432
MOODY	2 LA	8.730602629
MOODY	2 MA	6.292689078
BULLOCK	3 RD	5.986352294
BULLOCK	3 LA	7.839884187
BULLOCK	3 MA	9.484205905
WAGNER	3 RD	14.13076082
WAGNER	3 LA	13.30066687
WAGNER	3 MA	14.3635691
WILSON	3 RD	9.837047618
WILSON	3 LA	9.282695136
WILSON	3 MA	4.869839776
CONLEY	4 RD	20.87167223
CONLEY	4 LA	16.54364876
CONLEY	4 MA	14.10174659
CURLEY	4 RD	10.53598496
CURLEY	4 LA	13.361446
CURLEY	4 MA	13.00004071
GAUSE	4 RD	23.58719127
GAUSE	4 LA	14.54204378
GAUSE	4 MA	18.98069243
EDWARDS	5 RD	15.71063404
EDWARDS	5 LA	11.36015746
EDWARDS	5 MA	20.94304662
MCRAE JONES	5 RD	20.73790807
MCRAE JONES	5 LA	24.41721866
MCRAE JONES	5 MA	20.77030433

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Overview

There are several facts which point to the conclusion that F.L. Stanton Elementary School was not managed in a way that ensured the 2009 CRCT results were accurately reported.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 83.3% for the 2009 CRCT. There were only three schools in APS with a higher percentage in 2009.

Second, of the approximately 1,800 non-APS schools in the state taking the 2009 CRCT, no school had a higher percentage of flagged classrooms than F.L. Stanton Elementary School.

Third, with state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped sharply, from 83.3% to 7.1%.

Fourth, of the 35 flagged classrooms at F.L. Stanton Elementary School, 32 (91% of the total) had standard deviations that exceeded five, and 19 classrooms exceeded ten standard deviations. At five standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard

deviations the probability is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations from the state mean were, for a number of classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at F.L. Stanton Elementary School.

Fifth, is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis, which compares the number of WTR erasures to the total erasures for each student by subject. Of the WTR erasures at F.L. Stanton, 95.3% were produced by the flagged classrooms, which account for only 83.3% of the total classrooms in the school.

B. Narrative

In 2009, Principal Marlo Barber and Theresa Bell remained at the school after hours and erased and changed student answers on the CRCT from wrong to right. Principal Barber and Bell had a very close relationship. Bell frequently acted as Principal Barber's representative in her absence.

Three separate witnesses saw Principal Barber's and Bell's cars at the school after hours during test week and thought it was unusual. One of those teachers noticed that her test documents were not in the same order as they had been when she turned them in to the testing coordinator the previous day.

Bell denied she was at school after hours, and produced documents showing she was not there on some days. Bell did not deny cheating, but instead stated that she was afraid of losing her teaching certificate. Principal Barber refused to answer questions and asserted her Fifth Amendment right not to incriminate herself.

One teacher confessed that during the test she prompted a student using a non-verbal signal if she noticed the student had a wrong answer.

C. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Christi Giddens (Teacher)

Christi Giddens stated that she observed Theresa Bell staying late during test week and thought it was unusual. Giddens recalled that on one occasion during testing when she picked up her tests in the morning, they were in a different order than when she turned them in the day before. Giddens denied providing answers to students or erasing answers, but admitted that she would signal when she noticed a student had a wrong answer.

2. Julian Daniels (Teacher)

Julian Daniels observed Barber and Bell staying late after testing. Daniels thought this situation was highly unusual.

3. Bonita Summons (Teacher)

Bonita Summons observed Barber and Bell staying late after testing. Summons stated she thought this situation was highly unusual.

4. Dr. Arthurline Taylor (Testing Coordinator)

Dr. Taylor stated that the tests were stored in a secondary room inside the principal's office. Prior to 2010, the secondary room did not have a lock on it.

D. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Dr. Marlo Barber (Principal)

Principal Barber refused to answer our questions and asserted her Fifth Amendment rights in response to all questions posed to her, including questions as to whether she participated in, directed or knew about cheating on the CRCT at F.L. Stanton. She also refused to answer when asked about staying at the school with Theresa Bell after hours during testing week in 2009. A copy of the questions Principal Barber refused to answer is attached hereto as **Attachment A**.

2. Theresa Bell (Testing Facilitator)

Theresa Bell referred to herself as the "testing facilitator." She worked very closely with Principal Barber, attended meetings in her place and acted as her representative. Ms. Bell initially denied participating in, or having knowledge of, cheating. However, during a second interview at the school, the GBI confronted her with the allegation that witnesses saw her car and Dr. Barber's car at the school after hours during test week. Bell became visibly shaken.

Bell did not deny cheating, but stated that she was "afraid of losing [her] teaching certificate." The GBI informed Bell that she should tell the truth about what happened during the 2008-2009 CRCT, and Bell again stated that she was "afraid of losing her certification." Ms. Bell was given a subpoena for a third interview. She retained an attorney and during the third interview produced ATM receipts and medical records indicating that she was not present at the school after hours on some days.

E. Other Evidence

CRCT scores at F.L. Stanton declined in 2010 for first, third, fourth, and fifth grades.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

We conclude that Christi Giddens cheated on the 2009 CRCT by telling students when they had a wrong answer. We further conclude that Principal Marlo Barber and Theresa Bell erased and changed student answer sheets after the tests were concluded each day and after school hours.

Principal Marlo Barber failed in her ultimate responsibility for testing activities and for ensuring the ethical administration of, and proper security for the 2009 CRCT. It is our conclusion, from the statistical data and the other evidence secured in this investigation, that Principal Barber failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT and adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and she is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

MARLO BARBER

You have information concerning cheating at your school on the 2009 CRCT test, don't you?

You are refusing to provide these investigators with that information, aren't you?

You directed school employees to cheat on the 2009 CRCT, didn't you?

You coordinated cheating on the 2009 CRCT at your school, didn't you?

You facilitated the ability of school employees to cheat on the 2009 CRCT test, right?

You knew that school employees were cheating on the 2009 CRCT, didn't you?

You provided school employees with access to the student's CRCT tests so that these school employees could cheat?

You knew that teachers were providing student's with answers to the 2009 CRCT, didn't you?

You changed student's answers on the 2009 CRCT test, didn't you?

In 2009, you were entrusted with ensuring that school employees act ethically?

Cheating is unethical isn't it?

You instructed your teachers to cheat on the 2009 CRCT didn't you?

You pressured your teachers to cheat on the 2009 CRCT didn't you?

You accepted bonus money from APS based on test scores you knew to be false?

Your school accepted federal money based in part on test scores you knew to be false?

By cheating on the CRCT you denied the State of Georgia an accurate assessment of your student's academic performance?

By cheating CRCT you denied the parents of your students an accurate assessment of their children's academic performance?

By cheating on the CRCT, you denied the children in your care an accurate assessment of their own academic performance.

PERKERSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

2040 Brewer Blvd.
Atlanta, GA 30315

Principal: Dr. Mable Johnson
Testing Coordinator: Tony Allen

SRT-1 Executive Director: Dr. Sharon Davis-Williams

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Perkerson Elementary in 2009. Forty-seven people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Cheating at Perkerson is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms, witness testimony, and Principal Mable Johnson's refusal to answer questions about cheating. Principal Johnson was voluntarily interviewed one time. When questioned for a second time, Johnson invoked her Fifth Amendment rights to every question asked of her. Johnson failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

A. 2009 vs. 2010

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	66.7	7
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	48	4
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	21(17)	2(1)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	10.6	4.2
High Flagged Standard Deviation	20.3	5.2
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.7	3.3

B. Flagged Classrooms

Teachers	Grades & Test	Standard Deviation
ALAMUTU	1 RD	8.365568365
ALAMUTU	1 LA	6.574424292
ALAMUTU	1 MA	9.106573403
LEWIS	1 RD	8.916466874
LEWIS	1 LA	8.711163427
LEWIS	1 MA	8.597585527
MACK	1 RD	6.132385614
MACK	1 LA	5.00774642
PUCKETT	1 RD	9.733870686
PUCKETT	1 LA	9.037050626
PUCKETT	1 MA	11.5915851
JEFFERSON	2 RD	14.18133963
JEFFERSON	2 LA	9.483542231
JEFFERSON	2 MA	12.43892961
MATHIS	2 RD	11.06323561
MATHIS	2 LA	9.954272787
MATHIS	2 MA	5.195483394
WAY	2 RD	12.28624396
WAY	2 LA	6.964563335
WAY	2 MA	10.41366695
EDWARDS	3 RD	5.931015202
HOLLOWAY	3 RD	12.29778189
HOLLOWAY	3 MA	4.176565426
JEMISON	3 RD	9.028582779
JEMISON	3 LA	6.267767815
JEMISON	3 MA	6.798387298
MUWANDI	3 RD	9.964211081
MUWANDI	3 LA	7.926227511
MUWANDI	3 MA	7.443704649
SHORTER	3 RD	20.27421538
SHORTER	3 LA	16.51745073
SHORTER	3 MA	18.75781028
BLAKE	4 RD	16.26859827
BUTLER	4 RD	18.51564608
TANNER	4 RD	20.14382621
WILLIAMS, D	5 RD	16.65595403
WILLIAMS, D	5 MA	11.51391888
DAVIS	5 RD	12.27913871
DAVIS	5 MA	11.36464914
DEAS	5 RD	10.35042432
DEAS	5 MA	8.971351964
WILLIAMS, P	5 RD	18.29664333
WILLIAMS, P	5 MA	11.1196125
THOMAS	5 RD	14.01911714
THOMAS	5 MA	10.02938701
TOOKES	5 RD	10.86346983
TOOKES	5 LA	3.707339187
TOOKES	5 MA	4.40641695

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Overview

There are several facts which point to the conclusion that Perkerson Elementary School was not managed to ensure that the 2009 CRCT results were accurately reported to the Georgia Department of Education.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms was 66.7% for the 2009 CRCT. There were only ten schools in APS with a higher percentage that year.

Second, of the approximately 1,800 non-APS schools in the state taking the 2009 CRCT, only two had a higher percentage of flagged classrooms than Perkerson.

Third, with state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped from 66.7% to 7%.

Fourth, of the 48 flagged classrooms at Perkerson, 45 (93.8% of the total) had standard deviations that exceeded five and 23 classrooms exceeded ten standard deviations. At five standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard deviations, the probability is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations from the state mean were, for a number of classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at Perkerson.

Fifth is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures at Perkerson, 91% were produced by the flagged classrooms which account for only 66.7% of the total classrooms in the school.

Last, Principal Johnson condoned cheating at Perkerson. Dr. James Boyce told her about cheating at her school and she did nothing. SRT-1 Executive Director Sharon Davis-Williams also knew, and she instructed Dr. Boyce to cover up the cheating. Moreover, Principal Johnson refused to answer our questions about cheating, and invoked her Fifth Amendment right to remain silent in response to direct questions from us.

B. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Dr. James Boyce (Education Specialist)

Dr. Boyce worked for Dr. Sharon Davis-Williams at School Reform Team 1. He monitored testing at Perkerson during the 2009 CRCT. Dr. Boyce witnessed several teachers giving students the right answers during the testing period. He could not recall the names of any of the teachers other than LaShaine Blake. He was certain Blake was prompting her students. (Blake's fourth grade reading class was flagged with a standard deviation of 16.3.) Dr. Boyce told Principal Johnson about the prompting and she "blew him off." Dr. Boyce noted these discrepancies on testing forms, but said Davis-Williams instructed him to improperly change the forms. Dr. Boyce saw the testing coordinator, Tony Allen, by himself with the tests on multiple occasions.

2. Patricia Williams (Teacher)

Patricia Williams was a fifth grade teacher in 2009. Her reading and math classes were flagged with standard deviations of 18 and 11 respectively. She would collect the tests in a specific order at the end of the day. Williams stated that the tests would be in a different order when they came back to her the next morning. She says that Principal Johnson did not tell the teachers how the students scored in 2009, which she felt was highly unusual. Principal Johnson

directed the teachers to give investigators from the Blue Ribbon Commission reasons why the students did well on the tests. Johnson provided the teachers with explanations for the high scores, such as school instructional programs. Williams admitted that she erased stray marks. She was surprised that numerous “at risk” students passed the CRCT in 2009.

3. Shaun Lewis (Teacher)

Shaun Lewis was a first grade teacher for the 2009 CRCT. In 2009, the tests were kept in a conference room next to Principal Johnson’s office. At the first staff meeting of the 2008-2009 school year, Johnson posted the prior year’s CRCT scores for all teachers to see. This embarrassed some teachers based on their student’s performance. Lewis said that first grade teachers were surprised that some of their students passed. Most first grade teachers thought answers were changed by either Johnson, Testing Coordinator Tony Allen or at the Brewer Center when the tests were returned.

4. Jocelyn Mack (Teacher)

During the 2009 CRCT, Jocelyn Mack was a first grade teacher. Her reading and language arts classes were flagged for high wrong-to-right erasures with standard deviations of six and five. Principal Johnson asked Mack if she wanted her tests early. Mack received her tests by 7:00 a.m., when they normally were not distributed until 8:15 a.m. Mack also was told to erase stray marks, but was not comfortable doing so. Tony Allen erased stray marks for Mack and other teachers.

Mack was surprised that two of her students passed the 2009 CRCT. One student sat under a table, then randomly filled in answers and still passed. There was a student Mack wanted to keep in first grade at the request of the student’s parent. Johnson said the student had to be promoted to second grade because the student passed the CRCT. Several students passed first grade reading but are now struggling to read in the third grade. Everyone at the school was afraid of Johnson.

5. Edia Andrews (Teacher)

Edia Andrews was a second grade teacher during the 2009 CRCT. She said Tony Allen and Principal Johnson erased stray marks so the teachers did not have to. She heard that Johnson or Allen changed the students’ answers. None of Andrews’ classes were flagged for high wrong-to-right erasures.

6. Olufunke Oyebanjo Alamuta (Teacher)

Olufunke Oyebanjo Alamuta was a first grade teacher in 2009. All three of Alamuta’s classes were flagged in reading, language arts and math with standard deviations of 8.3, 6.5 and 9.1. Alamuta picked up his tests early each morning from Principal Johnson and Tony Allen and erased stray marks. He was surprised that children with disabilities received high scores.

7. Crystal Cleveland-Thomas (Teacher)

Crystal Cleveland-Thomas was a fifth grade teacher during the 2009 CRCT. She had two subjects flagged in reading and math with standard deviations of fourteen and ten. She received her tests early each morning from Principal Johnson and Tony Allen. Cleveland-Thomas erased stray marks as she was instructed to do and was surprised when some students passed.

8. Marcus Bishop (Paraprofessional)

Marcus Bishop was a paraprofessional for kindergarten during the 2009 CRCT and did not participate in testing. He heard teachers talking about behavior problems during testing days but yet these students had abnormally high test scores.

9. Alicia Booker-Duradia (Paraprofessional)

Alicia Booker-Duradia was a kindergarten paraprofessional during 2009 CRCT testing. She said Principal Johnson changed the testing procedures in 2009 by not requiring proctors in the testing room, instead using hall monitors. Booker-Duradia was surprised at the high test scores posted due to the amount behavioral problems. Previous principal Dr. Rowe was forced to resign because of low test scores.

10. The following people testified that they generally had no knowledge of cheating but that there were one or more students in their class whose passing scores surprised them.

Robin Holloway (third grade teacher); Dorcas Muwandi (third grade teacher); Keyaneshia Tanner (fourth grade teacher); Gloria McCullough-Wright (fifth grade teacher); and Carla Davis (fifth grade teacher).

C. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Mable Johnson (Principal)

Principal Mable Johnson was interviewed the first time with her counsel present and she answered questions. The 2008-2009 school year was her first at Perkerson after transferring to Perkerson from Tullwater Elementary School. Tullwater closed the previous year. She denied any knowledge of cheating on the CRCT test. Only Tony Allen and Johnson had access to the tests after they were collected from the teachers. She once saw Allen by himself in the room where the tests were stored. If answers were changed, it would have been done by Allen, although Johnson did not think he would change student's answers. She trusts Allen. Johnson had no explanation for the high number of erasures.

During her second interview, Principal Johnson invoked her Fifth Amendment rights and refused to answer all the questions asked. A copy of the questions she refused to answer is included as **Attachment A**.

2. Tony Allen (Testing Coordinator)

Tony Allen was the testing coordinator for Perkerson during the 2009 CRCT and was interviewed twice during the investigation. He answered all questions asked of him during both interviews. Only he and Johnson had access to the tests after they were collected from the teachers. He denied that he changed any student's answers, or that he had any knowledge of answers being changed.

Allen erased stray marks. While he was packing the tests to be returned to the Brewer Center, he noticed a lot of erasures and smears on the tests. One girl sat under her desk, refusing to take the test, but nevertheless passed. If someone changed answers, it could not have been the teachers because they would not have had time. It would have to be Principal Johnson because he did not do it. Allen said there is no question in his mind that something happened, but he did not see anything. He "knew in his heart" that cheating occurred.

3. Lashaine Blake

During the 2009 CRCT testing, Blake was a fourth grade teacher. She testified that she had no knowledge of cheating. She attributed her high wrong-to-right erasures to testing strategies she taught the children. Blake also denied being close to Principal Johnson. During her second interview, Blake told investigators that she saw Lera Middlebrooks, a proctor, pointing to the questions and prompting students to change their answers during testing.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

We conclude that Principal Mable Johnson cheated on the 2009 CRCT. She did not offer any alternate explanation for the erasures and refused to answer our questions. Tony Allen assisted Principal Johnson in the altering of test documents. It is further our conclusion that LaShain Blake cheated on the 2009 CRCT. Principal Mable Johnson also failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT and adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and she is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

MABLE JOHNSON

You have information concerning cheating at your school on the 2009 CRCT test, don't you?

You are refusing to provide these investigators with that information, aren't you?

By cheating on the 2009 CRCT, you denied struggling students the help they needed to succeed?

You directed school employees to cheat on the 2009 CRCT, didn't you?

You coordinated cheating on the 2009 CRCT at your school, didn't you?

You facilitated the ability of school employees to cheat on the 2009 CRCT test, right?

You knew that school employees were cheating on the 2009 CRCT, didn't you?

You provided school employees with access to the student's CRCT tests so that these school employees could cheat?

You changed student's answers on the 2009 CRCT test, didn't you?

You did not report violations of testing protocol as you were required to do by Georgia law, did you?

In 2009, you were entrusted with ensuring that school employees act ethically?

Cheating is unethical isn't it?

You instructed your teachers to cheat on the 2009 CRCT didn't you?

You pressured your teachers to cheat on the 2009 CRCT didn't you?

You accepted bonus money from APS based on test scores you knew to be false?

Your school accepted federal money based in part on test scores you knew to be false?

By cheating on the CRCT you denied the State of Georgia an accurate assessment of your student's academic performance?

By cheating CRCT you denied the parents of your students an accurate assessment of their children's academic performance?

By cheating on the CRCT, you denied the children in your care an accurate assessment of their own academic performance.

The State of Georgia entrusted you to educate the children in your care, right?

The children of your school entrusted you to educate them?

By cheating on the CRCT, you violated the trust placed in you by the State of Georgia, the parents of your students and the children these parents placed your care?

CONNALLY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

1654 S Alvarado SW
Atlanta GA 30311-2637

Principal: Mimi Robinson
Testing Coordinator: Wanda Moore-Williams

SRT-1 Executive Director: Dr. Sharon Davis-Williams

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

We conclude that cheating occurred on the CRCT at Connally Elementary in 2009. Forty-four people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. One teacher confessed to cheating. Cheating at Connally is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms, a confession, witness testimony, and Principal Mimi Robinson's refusal to answer questions about cheating. Principal Robinson failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

A. 2009 vs. 2010

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	70.5	9.9
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	55	8
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	20(18)	5(2)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	11.5	4.9
High Flagged Standard Deviation	27.6	11.1
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3	3.1

B. Flagged Classrooms

Teacher	Grade & Test	Standard Deviation
HARBOUR	1 RD	4.989645814
HARBOUR	1 LA	5.948463026
HARBOUR	1 MA	5.123165044
HASSAN	1 MA	10.29977713
SANDERS	1 LA	4.795188887
SANDERS	1 MA	5.250436483
BAILEY	2 RD	3.042883907
BAILEY	2 LA	3.012080598
BAILEY	2 MA	5.053521828
PHARR	2 MA	3.704999627
ROFIE	2 RD	11.13795134
ROFIE	2 LA	4.279818594
ROFIE	2 MA	11.44561239
WILSON	2 RD	13.88070319
WILSON	2 LA	5.396477417
WILSON	2 MA	14.38656966
MCCLOUD	3 RD	18.07141354
MCCLOUD	3 LA	13.27374433
MCCLOUD	3 MA	16.56172273
PAUL	3 RD	14.68962972
PAUL	3 LA	14.04421981
PAUL	3 MA	16.12151382
SYLVESTER	3 RD	12.09258306
SYLVESTER	3 LA	9.47995225
SYLVESTER	3 MA	5.506745306
WILLIAMS	3 RD	27.58655485
WILLIAMS	3 LA	25.32523529
WILLIAMS	3 MA	23.01671268
BRAMWELL	4 RD	9.255002155
BRAMWELL	4 LA	3.532059716
BRAMWELL	4 MA	6.792958536
BUTLER	4 RD	19.70970725
BUTLER	4 LA	16.62610924
BUTLER	4 MA	15.40790528
FULFORD	4 RD	17.23554221
FULFORD	4 LA	10.86630583
FULFORD	4 MA	10.92209498
KING	4 RD	6.909275388
KING	4 LA	6.673814443
KING	4 MA	5.56832219
TAYLOR	4 RD	17.03092435
TAYLOR	4 LA	14.08628719
TAYLOR	4 MA	14.77419759
DARVILLE	5 RD	16.06406154
DARVILLE	5 LA	11.2401808
DARVILLE	5 MA	12.08839125
FRANKLIN	5 RD	13.34900034
FRANKLIN	5 LA	8.524406345
FRANKLIN	5 MA	13.49814414
LEITNER	5 RD	7.764803562
LEITNER	5 LA	3.026178452
LEITNER	5 MA	5.355609079
MATHIS	5 RD	27.23956893
MATHIS	5 LA	18.18849872
MATHIS	5 MA	14.06163679

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Overview

There are several facts which point to the conclusion that Connally Elementary School was not managed to ensure that the 2009 CRCT results were accurately reported.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 70.5% for the 2009 CRCT. With state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped significantly from 70.5% to 9.9%.

Second, of the approximately 1,800 non-APS schools in the state taking the 2009 CRCT, only one school had a higher percentage of flagged classrooms than Connally.

Third, of the 55 flagged classrooms at Connally, 47 (85% of the total) had standard deviations that exceeded five, and 32 classrooms exceeded ten standard deviations. At five standard deviations, the probability that the number of wrong-to-right erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard deviations, the probability is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations from the state mean were, for a number of classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at Connally Elementary School.

Fourth is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures 94% were produced by the flagged classrooms which account for 70.5% of the total classrooms in the school.

B. Narrative

One witness observed Testing Coordinator Wanda Moore-Williams, James Howard and Michael Robinette in an office with the tests erasing answers. All three deny any involvement with cheating. However, only two individuals had access to the tests – Ms. Williams and Principal Mimi Robinson. Principal Mimi Robinson pled the Fifth Amendment in response to our questions about her participation in, knowledge of, or direction to cheat on the CRCT.

C. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Joyce Bucklen (Paraprofessional)

Joyce Bucklen observed James Howard, Wanda Moore-Williams, and Michael Robinette in Principal Robinson's office and it "looked like they were erasing on the test." Each person had a stack of tests in front of them. At the end of the day, Bucklen heard Howard say he changed the tests to get the bonus money. Bucklen stated that Howard would stand in the hall during testing and warn teachers who were administering the test if people were coming down the hall. Bucklen also observed Howard do this in prior years.

2. Bobbi Garlington (School Improvement Specialist)

Bobbi Garlington states she “heard” that Moore-Williams, Robinette and Howard were in Robinson’s office, but does not recall where she heard this information.

3. Renard McCloud (Teacher)

Renard McCloud recalled that on the 2008 CRCT, he placed his students’ answer sheets in alphabetical order at the end of the test day and returned them to the testing coordinator. When he picked them up the following morning, the answer sheets were out of order.

4. Latasha Wilson (Teacher)

Latasha Wilson admitted that when a student in her class bubbled two answers on the same question, Moore-Williams directed her to erase both answers and allow the student to answer the question again.

5. Michael Darville (Early Intervention)

Michael Darville stated that a student reported to him that Gwen Bramwell improperly assisted students on the test.

6. Violet Franklin (Teacher)

Violet Franklin stated that a student reported to her that Gwen Bramwell improperly assisted students on the test.

7. Klarissa Hightower (Teacher)

Klarissa Hightower stated that a student reported to her that Gwen Bramwell improperly assisted students on the test.

D. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Mimi Robinson (Principal)

Principal Robinson asserted her Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination in response to each question asked, including specific questions about her involvement in, and knowledge of, cheating at Connally. A copy of the questions Principal Robinson refused to answer is included as **Attachment A**.

2. Wanda Moore-Williams (Testing Coordinator)

Wanda Moore-Williams denied erasing student answers or engaging in any other form of cheating. She stated that the only time she was in the office with Howard and Robinette was during ITBS testing. Howard and Robinette assisted Moore-Williams in packing up the students’ ITBS tests because Moore-Williams could not lift anything due to a medical condition. Moore-Williams believes that Bucklen falsely accused her of changing answers because of a

personal vendetta against Moore-Williams. She denied ever instructing a teacher to erase a students' answer or allowing a student to answer the question again.

3. James Howard (Band Director)

James Howard denied cheating. He stated that he assisted Moore-Williams with the ITBS test.

4. Michael Robinette (Hands on Atlanta)

Michael Robinette denied cheating or being in an office with Moore-Williams erasing answers. Robinette said he would erase stray marks and darken ovals that had already been answered.

5. Gwen Bramwell (Teacher)

Gwen Bramwell denied cheating on the CRCT.

E. Other Evidence

- Connally met AYP in school years 2006-2007, 2007-2008, and 2008-2009.
- In 2009-2010, Connally did not meet AYP. The percentage of classrooms flagged for WTR erasures decreased from 70.5% in 2009 to 9.9% in 2010.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

We conclude that teachers and administrators erased and changed student answer documents on the 2009 CRCT at Connally Elementary, but we lack sufficient evidence to say which people erased and changed. We also conclude that Gwen Bramwell cheated. Principal Mimi Robinson asserted her Fifth Amendment right and refused to answer our questions.

We conclude that Principal Robinson failed to adequately monitor the 2009 CRCT. Principal Mimi Robinson failed in her ultimate responsibility for testing activities and for ensuring the ethical administration of, and proper security for the 2009 CRCT. It is our conclusion, from the statistical data and the other evidence secured in this investigation, that Principal Robinson failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT and adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and she is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

MIMI ROBINSON

You have information concerning cheating at your school on the 2009 CRCT test, don't you?

You are refusing to provide these investigators with that information, aren't you?

You directed school employees to cheat on the 2009 CRCT, didn't you?

You coordinated cheating on the 2009 CRCT at your school, didn't you?

You facilitated the ability of school employees to cheat on the 2009 CRCT test, right?

You knew that school employees were cheating on the 2009 CRCT, didn't you?

You provided school employees with access to the student's CRCT tests so that these school employees could cheat?

You knew that teachers were providing student's with answers to the 2009 CRCT, didn't you?

You changed student's answers on the 2009 CRCT test, didn't you?

You did not report violations of testing protocol as you were required to do by Georgia law, did you?

In 2009, you were entrusted with ensuring that school employees act ethically?

Cheating is unethical isn't it?

You instructed your teachers to cheat on the 2009 CRCT didn't you?

You pressured your teachers to cheat on the 2009 CRCT didn't you?

You accepted bonus money from APS based on test scores you knew to be false?

Your school accepted federal money based in part on test scores you knew to be false?

By cheating on the CRCT you denied the State of Georgia an accurate assessment of your student's academic performance?

By cheating CRCT you denied the parents of your students an accurate assessment of their children's academic performance?

By cheating on the CRCT, you denied the children in your care an accurate assessment of their own academic performance.

USHER/COLLIER HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

631 Harwell Road, N.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30318

Principal: Gwendolyn Rogers
Testing Coordinator: Donald Bullock

SRT-4 Executive Director: Tamara Cotman

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Usher Elementary in 2009. Forty-three people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Three teachers confessed to cheating at the direction of the test coordinator, Donald Bullock. Cheating at Usher is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms, confessions and witness testimony. Principal Gwendolyn Rogers failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

A. 2009 vs. 2010

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	78.4	13.3
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	40	8
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	14(14)	5(2)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	18.5	4.74
High Flagged Standard Deviation	38.1	5.8
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.1	3.4

B. Flagged Classrooms

Teachers	Grades & Test	Standard Deviation
BROOKS	1 RD	17.95822191
BROOKS	1 LA	14.78425145
BROOKS	1 MA	16.28163999
HOLLAND	1 RD	9.053141313
HOLLAND	1 LA	9.06061194
HOLLAND	1 MA	6.662318539
SOYINKA	1 RD	10.84326451
SOYINKA	1 LA	15.16342855
SOYINKA	1 MA	12.81760464
ZACHERY	2 RD	3.110352653
ZACHERY	2 MA	7.728348335
BURNEY WATSON	3 RD	24.83074131
BURNEY WATSON	3 LA	8.113355496
BURNEY WATSON	3 MA	11.71760927
LOVETT	3 RD	26.70142647
LOVETT	3 LA	9.176189494
LOVETT	3 MA	10.01352536
SANDERS	3 RD	22.46947552
SANDERS	3 LA	14.14114288
SANDERS	3 MA	22.0128703
SMITH	3 RD	32.46467819
SMITH	3 LA	12.85840002
SMITH	3 MA	7.866562513
GREEN D	4 RD	15.57168685
GREEN D	4 LA	3.398073475
JACKSON	4 RD	17.20925912
JACKSON	4 LA	10.21667976
JACKSON	4 MA	7.181248635
WARE	4 RD	21.71258285
WARE	4 LA	22.97407218
WARE	4 MA	31.1458192
ARONSON	5 RD	37.44090207
ARONSON	5 LA	30.77499827
ARONSON	5 MA	38.11328458
BRADFORD	5 RD	35.93530231
BRADFORD	5 LA	26.16562644
BRADFORD	5 MA	37.57052406
LADRIE	5 RD	34.68063584
LABRIE	5 LA	22.11837313
LABRIE	5 MA	20.47356742

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Overview

There are several facts which point to the conclusion that educators at Usher cheated on the 2009 CRCT.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 78.4% for the 2009 CRCT. There were only four schools in APS with a higher percentage in 2009.

Second, of the approximately 1,800 non-APS schools in the state taking the 2009 CRCT, no school had a higher percentage of flagged classrooms than Usher.

Third, with state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped significantly from 78.4% to 13.3%.

Fourth, of the 40 flagged classrooms at Usher, 38 had standard deviations that exceeded five (95% of the total), and 30 (75% of the total) classrooms exceeded ten standard deviations. At five standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard deviations the probability is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations from the state mean were, for a number of classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at this school.

Fifth is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures at Usher, 95.2% were produced by the flagged classrooms which account for only 78.4% of the total classrooms in the school.

Finally, three teachers testified that testing coordinator Donald Bullock encouraged and allowed teachers to erase and change students' CRCT answer sheets. Principal Rogers knew Bullock improperly provided access to the CRCT materials when he announced over the school intercom that teachers could keep their tests beyond the testing period.

B. Narrative

In 2009, Testing Coordinator Donald Bullock, and numerous teachers participated in coordinated, schoolwide cheating. Testing Coordinator Bullock announced that teachers could pick up their tests early before the test began and keep them until the end of the school day. Principal Gwendolyn Rogers was present in the building when Bullock made this announcement and should have been aware that Mr. Bullock distributed the tests early. Mr. Bullock also allowed teachers to retrieve their tests in the afternoons after testing ended so that they could erase students' answers and change them from wrong to right. Specifically, Mr. Bullock approached numerous teachers and asked them how their students performed on the CRCT that morning. He then asked the teachers whether they needed to "review" the students' tests to make sure the students performed well and met targets. The teachers said they understood that Mr. Bullock meant that the teachers should change student answers. If a teacher agreed to "review" the tests or "stay late," Mr. Bullock would take the tests and answer documents to the teacher's classroom in the afternoon after testing ended for the day. Mr. Bullock placed the tests in his briefcase, dropped them off at each teacher's classroom and then retrieved them from each teacher, placing them back in his briefcase.

Prior to the CRCT, Dr. Rogers required the teachers to make a list of their students and indicate whether the teacher expected that the student would score high, middle or low. The teachers provided this list to Principal Rogers prior to the CRCT. Principal Rogers threatened to put any teacher on a PDP who did not have good CRCT scores. She stated to the staff: "If Johnny does not know how to read, he had better know how on test day."

There was tremendous pressure on the teachers to meet targets. Teachers said they feared for their jobs if their students failed to meet targets. Other teachers stated that they changed answers so that they would be recognized by the school for good test scores.

Several teachers admitted being surprised by how well their students performed on the CRCT.

C. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Diane Green (Teacher)

Diane Green changed answers on the 2009 CRCT at Usher. Ms. Green stated that she corrected the students' answers because she wanted to get recognized by the school for good test scores in reading. A known consequence for poor test results within APS is being placed on a PDP. Donald Bullock served as Testing Coordinator at Usher for the first and only time in 2009. Bullock made the tests accessible to teachers in order to change student answers by providing the tests early on each day of testing or allowing them to retain the tests after the testing period ended. On one occasion, Mr. Bullock returned the test to Ms. Green after the test period ended using a book bag. He brought them to her classroom where she kept them for approximately thirty minutes and changed answers. Mr. Bullock then came back around to collect the tests. Ms. Green stated that she only changed the students' tests who had previously been identified as "exceeds expectations" on the CRCT because she wanted to make sure they stayed in that category. Ms. Green told Mr. Bullock that she was afraid, and he told her, "you don't let anyone know that you did it."

2. Mary Ware (Teacher)

On at least two days during the 2009 CRCT Mr. Bullock delivered Mary Ware's tests back to her in her classroom after the students left for the day. Mr. Bullock told her that she needed to meet targets. Ms. Ware changed student answers in her classroom. Mr. Bullock then returned to her classroom to collect the tests. Mr. Bullock also directed Ms. Ware to a teacher workroom where he instructed her to check the answers of other students in the same grade level.

3. Stacy Smith (Teacher)

Stacy Smith confessed to erasing student answers on the 2009 CRCT and changing them from wrong to right. In 2009, Mr. Bullock approached Ms. Smith after the test period was over and asked whether Ms. Smith was staying after school. Mr. Bullock told Ms. Smith to look over the tests and see how the students did. Mr. Bullock told Ms. Smith "If you want I can make sure your children do well. If you want to get the tests back let me know." Mr. Bullock delivered the student answer documents and tests to Ms. Smith's classroom where Ms. Smith changed student answers from wrong to right on the reading portion of the test. Mr. Bullock returned to Ms. Smith's classroom and retrieved the student answer documents and tests. Ms. Smith changed answers because Dr. Rogers put incredible pressure on the teachers to meet targets and told them that teachers who did not have good CRCT scores would be placed on a PDP.

4. Joe Sanders (Teacher)

Sanders denied that he cheated but stated that Mr. Bullock approached him three different times during the 2009 CRCT and asked him whether he wanted to keep his tests and look over them to make sure his students did well. Mr. Bullock was more persistent on reading days than on math and science days. Sanders told Mr. Bullock he did not want to keep his tests. Two other third grade teachers, Ms. Burney and Ms. Lovett, as well as a fifth grade teacher, Ms. Warner, told him that they had also been approached by Mr. Bullock.

5. Sheretha Lovett (Teacher)

Lovett denied any knowledge of cheating.

6. Jessica Watson-Burney (Teacher)

Watson-Burney denied any knowledge of cheating.

7. Monique Campbell (Teacher)

At faculty meetings, Dr. Rogers told the teachers that they would be placed on a PDP for low test performance and that this message came to Rogers from Executive Director Tamara Cotman.

8. Stephanie Warner (Teacher)

Warner states that Mr. Bullock once asked her if she needed to keep her tests a little longer after the students took a particular section. Warner declined and asked, "why would I?" Mr. Bullock said, "Oh, just checking" and never approached her about it again.

9. Brittany Aronson (Teacher)

Aronson taught fifth grade at Usher in 2009. Her class had an unusually high amount of erasures, but she denied that she had any involvement with cheating. She recalled being surprised by how many children did well in her class. She stated that one child in particular was doing very poorly in school and she recommended that the child receive special education instruction. Ms. Aronson stated that this particular student not only passed the CRCT, but exceeded. Ms. Aronson stated that in a staff meeting principal Rogers told the staff that "if Johnny does not know how to read, he had better know how on test day." Ms. Aronson states that principal Rogers ordered her to change certain students' grades from Ds and Fs to Cs.

10. Tiffany LeBree (Teacher)

LeBree denied having any knowledge of cheating, but confirmed that principal Rogers stated in a staff meeting that "little Johnny may not be able to read now, but he better be able to read on test day."

11. Ameerah Malcolm-Hill (Teacher)

Malcolm Hill confirmed that Donald Bullock made an announcement that the CRCT tests could be picked up early and kept until the end of the day. Ms. Malcolm-Hill believes that principal Rogers knew this announcement had been made, as it was heard by all personnel in the building.

D. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Gwendolyn Rogers (Principal)

Principal Rogers denied participating in, or having knowledge of, cheating on the 2009 CRCT or any other year. She denied ever making a statement in a faculty meeting that "if Johnny can't read he'd better be able to read on test day." She denied having any knowledge that Mr. Bullock allowed teachers to pick up tests early or keep them late, and denied that she ever heard Mr. Bullock make any such announcement over the P.A. system.

2. Donald Bullock (Testing Coordinator)

Mr. Bullock denied participation in, or knowledge of, cheating. He never allowed teachers to pick up tests early or keep them late. He also denied approaching any teacher about retrieving their tests after hours and changing answers.

E. Other Evidence

- Several teachers stated that they were surprised that so many students in their class passed the CRCT.
- Numerous teachers stated that Dr. Rogers and the APS Administration placed unreasonable pressure on them to meet targets, or be placed on a PDP or lose their job.
- Discrepancies exist among some teachers' testimony. While some teachers went to the conference room on the morning of testing to pick up their tests and sign them out early, others remained in their classroom and Mr. Bullock or another individual delivered the tests to their class.
- Usher made AYP from 2006-2009, but did not in 2010.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

We conclude that Testing Coordinator Donald Bullock and Principal Rogers directed and orchestrated a schoolwide scheme to erase and change student answer sheets. Mr. Bullock provided teachers access to student answer documents by allowing them to pick up tests early, keep them throughout the day, or by returning tests to certain teachers each day after the testing period ended. Bullock instructed teachers to change answers to make sure their students made targets. We further conclude that Diane Green, Mary Ware and Stacy Smith cheated on the 2009 CRCT.

We found no direct evidence that flagged fifth grade teachers erased and changed student answer sheets. However, indirect evidence of cheating exists in those grades based on the testimony of Tiffany LeBree and others who testified that Bullock approached them and asked them to keep their tests after the test period ended. The statistical probability of even the lowest wrong-to-right standard deviations present in these classes, in conjunction with Mr. Bullock's practice in other grades of directing teachers to change student answers, as well as the culture of

intimidation created by Principal Rogers and Bullock, lead us to believe that at least some of the first, second and fifth grade teachers erased and changed student answer sheets. Even if the teachers did not change his or her own student answers, based upon the above evidence, we conclude that another teacher or Mr. Bullock changed the students' answers.

It is also our conclusion from the statistical data and the other evidence that Principal Rogers failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT, and adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and she is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

PEYTON FOREST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

301 Peyton Road, SW
Atlanta, Georgia 30311

Principal: Karen Barlow-Brown
Testing Coordinator: Cornelia Primous

SRT-1 Executive Director: Dr. Sharon Davis-Williams

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Peyton Forest Elementary in 2009. Forty-seven people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Cheating at this school is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms and witness testimony. Many teachers were involved in the cheating and Principal Karen Barlow-Brown knew of and encouraged cheating. Principal Karen Barlow-Brown failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

A. 2009 vs. 2010

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	86.1	26.1
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	62	18
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	22(20)	10(5)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	11.9	6.0
High Flagged Standard Deviation	34.4	14
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.9	3.2

B. Flagged Classrooms

Teacher	Grade & Test	Standard Deviation
FULLER	1 RD	6.845316639
FULLER	1 LA	7.721533846
FULLER	1 MA	5.238670023
MANNING	1 RD	13.7723999
MANNING	1 LA	9.724302665
MANNING	1 MA	12.40459958
MCRAE JACKSON	1 RD	5.305964802
MCRAE JACKSON	1 LA	7.014674263
MCRAE JACKSON	1 MA	6.806217113
MERRITT	1 RD	7.329495331
MERRITT	1 LA	6.93873241
MERRITT	1 MA	6.590727549
WILEY	1 RD	5.622259282
WILEY	1 LA	6.190539421
WILEY	1 MA	10.87495625
BICKHAM	2 RD	15.21267896
BICKHAM	2 LA	15.74843919
BICKHAM	2 MA	22.54176257
CAGLE	2 LA	4.523932656
HERARD	2 RD	6.062562011
HERARD	2 LA	11.4619935
HERARD	2 MA	8.160896224
LAWSHEA	2 RD	12.03279573
LAWSHEA	2 LA	16.90360985
LAWSHEA	2 MA	14.60836393
COLLIER	3 RD	6.806191242
COLLIER	3 LA	10.77508464
COLLIER	3 MA	3.997514131
HARRIS	3 RD	7.709715267
HARRIS	3 LA	7.19057874
HARRIS	3 MA	5.600461058
JAMES	3 LA	13.2243945
WALKER	3 RD	12.25766118
WALKER	3 LA	14.67697977
WALKER	3 MA	8.80635491
WOODS	3 RD	10.7826517
WOODS	3 LA	9.760537304
WOODS	3 MA	8.429190928
BATTLE	4 RD	24.03628557
BATTLE	4 LA	15.03660444
BATTLE	4 MA	12.07701994
CAMPBELL	4 RD	4.89549029
CAMPBELL	4 LA	9.162667904
CAMPBELL	4 MA	7.977518957
WACKERMAN	4 RD	15.85135131
WACKERMAN	4 LA	23.63240343
WACKERMAN	4 MA	23.22866993
WEAVER	4 RD	12.37150789
WEAVER	4 LA	12.48255027
WEAVER	4 MA	19.43110253
BROWN	5 RD	12.27913871
BROWN	5 LA	21.19101291
BROWN	5 MA	16.2515037
MORRIS	5 RD	30.35376941
MORRIS	5 LA	13.72581941
MORRIS	5 MA	3.728938885
PASCHAL	5 RD	34.44880292
PASCHAL	5 LA	10.56260183
PASCHAL	5 MA	10.65198285
PATTERSON	5 RD	17.50383665
PATTERSON	5 LA	10.30954442
PATTERSON	5 MA	9.93931656

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Overview

There are several facts which point to the conclusion that Peyton Forest Elementary School was not managed to ensure that the 2009 CRCT results were accurately reported.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 86.1% for the 2009 CRCT. There were only two schools in APS with a higher percentage in 2009.

Second, of the approximately 1,800 non-APS schools in the state taking the 2009 CRCT, no school had a higher percentage of flagged classrooms than Peyton Forest Elementary School.

Third, with state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped significantly from 86.1% to 26.1%.

Fourth, of the 62 flagged classrooms at this school, 59 (95% of the total) had standard deviations that exceeded five, and 34 classrooms exceeded ten standard deviations. At five standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard deviations the probability is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations from the state mean were, for a number of classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at Peyton Forest Elementary School.

Fifth is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures, 97.1% were produced by the flagged classrooms which account for 86.1% of the total classrooms in the school.

Finally, witnesses testified that they heard a select group of teachers were changing answers on the CRCT after school and on the weekends. Cynthia James testified that Olivia Harris gave her a copy of the 2008 CRCT so that she could use it to prepare her students. Olivia Harris should not have had a copy of the 2008 CRCT because it was still secured. Principal Barlow-Brown knew that Harris gave the test to James. A witness saw teachers cheating on the district benchmark assessment tests and the Fifth Grade Writing Test.

B. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Cynthia James (Teacher)

In the fall of 2008, Olivia Harris gave Cynthia James a copy of the 2008 CRCT. The test was clearly marked, "SECURE MATERIALS. MAY NOT BE DUPLICATED." James knew that no one should have a copy of the 2008 CRCT so when Principal Barlow-Brown later said to James, "I know Ms. Harris gave you some materials," James pretended to be confused. James kept the copy of the CRCT and gave it to the GBI and to the Blue Ribbon Commission. We have confirmed the test James had was a copy of the 2008 CRCT.

James recalled another occasion when Harris had a transparency of a page from the CRCT on her classroom wall. Principal Barlow-Brown was walking out of the classroom as James walked in, so Principal Barlow-Brown must have seen the transparency as well. James

heard Harris say to teacher Kassia Walker, "I wish Ms. [DePaula] Woods would get back because I only know the reading" portion of the test.

On the makeup day for the CRCT, James saw that Harris' students were in teacher Nicole Collier's classroom and at a different time Collier's students were in Harris' classroom. James believed that Collier and Harris were taking turns watching each other's students while the other altered test documents.

A student told James that teachers had given her answers to the CRCT, but did not identify specific teachers.

Students were pulled out of the classroom to be tested separately. James attended a third grade meeting at which teachers discussed which students to pull out of their classrooms and test in a small group. These students were tested separately by Loretta Hairston, a retired teacher who was brought in to help administer the test.

James identified two reasons why Principal Barlow-Brown must have known about the cheating. First, after Harris gave James a copy of the test, Principal Barlow-Brown said to James, "I know Ms. Harris gave you some materials." Second, Harris had a student with learning disabilities who was about to be placed in PEC (special education); however, the student scored so well on the CRCT the previous year that he could not qualify for special education. Harris shared her concerns about the discrepancy between the child's ability and test scores with administrator Evelyn Britton. Britton told Principal Barlow-Brown about Harris' concerns.

James told Cornelia Primous that something "not right" was going on with the tests and that Primous should protect the tests. Primous then locked up the tests in her office.

James' contract with APS was not renewed after the 2008-2009 school year. She believes that Principal Barlow-Brown terminated her in retaliation for not cheating and for questioning the actions of the others.

2. Tameka King (Teacher)

Tameka King taught special education at Peyton Forest in 2009-2010 and believes Principal Barlow-Brown cheated.

King heard about cheating when she started at the school in the fall of 2009. She heard that the following teachers changed answers on the tests in the library after school and on the weekends: Cornelia Primous, Stephens (King believes she is a retired teacher), Evelyn Britton, Olivia Harris, and a paraprofessional.

The abilities of the children in King's class did not match the high scores they received on the 2009 CRCT. King e-mailed Dr. Alexander and Delicia Goodman-Lee with her concerns.

King believes teachers cheated on the 2010 test as well. She heard children talking to each other about how they had the answers to the test.

3. *Bahji Varner (Teacher)*

Bahji Varner's first year at Peyton Forest was the 2009-2010 school year. Varner was not at the school for the 2009 CRCT, but witnessed cheating in 2010.

Varner saw teachers cheat on the APS district-wide benchmark tests. She proctored during this test and saw teachers point to certain questions and then identify the correct answer. After completion, the tests were scanned and scored at the school. Enolar Callands would watch the tests as they were scored. If the scores were not high enough, the teachers would review the tests with the students. Then, the students with low scores were sent to Callands' or Bess Mae Paschal's classroom to retake the test.

On the Fifth Grade Writing Test, Paschal instructed students to write drafts, and bring them to her to review and revise. Only after her revisions were the students allowed to write the essay on the official paper.

Varner said the following teachers cheated on the benchmark tests and the Fifth Grade Writing Test: fourth grade teachers Jamie Manning, Cernitha Battle, and Angela Campbell, and fifth grade teachers Enolar Callands, Karen Patterson, Milo Morris, Travis Brown, and Bess Mae Paschal. Varner stated that Callands was the ringleader.

Varner did not report the cheating to anyone because she believed everyone to whom she should report knew of, and condoned, cheating.

4. *Jessica Wackerman (Teacher)*

In 2009, teacher Enolar Callands took approximately four students from Wackerman's class to test them because of behavior problems.

Wackerman believes that fellow teachers Cernitha Battle and Enolar Callands changed answers for the fourth grade students. Principal Barlow-Brown reprimanded teacher Alisha Weaver at a meeting because one of Weaver's students wrote "stomp the CRCT" in her test booklet. Principal Barlow-Brown knew what the student wrote because Battle and Callands had to go through all of the test booklets and answer sheets to "erase stray marks." The "erasing of stray marks" in test booklets would not be necessary because the test booklets are not scanned.

When the 2009 CRCT results came back, Wackerman was shocked at how well her students performed. She believes someone changed her students' tests.

5. *Brenda Bickham (Teacher)*

Brenda Bickham's third and fifth grade students failed the benchmark tests, but did well on the CRCT. When the 2009 CRCT results came out, Bickham told Principal Barlow-Brown that her students were not on the level indicated by the CRCT scores. She thinks that the administrators changed the tests and that Principal Barlow-Brown, Testing Coordinator Cornelia Primous, Assistant Principal Jacquelyn Poindexter, and teacher Olivia Harris were involved.

Teacher Cynthia James told Bickham that she had a copy of the CRCT for the third grade and that she got it from Harris.

6. Kassia Walker (Teacher)

Kassia Walker taught third grade at Peyton Forest in 2009. She heard that Harris had a copy of the CRCT and transparencies of the test as well. Walker also heard that teachers were asked to look at the CRCT booklet. Harris did not give Walker a copy of the test.

Walker saw that Collier's students would sometimes be in Harris' classroom with Harris' students and vice versa, on several occasions during the CRCT testing days.

7. Ramona Rivers (Teacher)

Ramona Rivers taught at Peyton Forest until 2007. Rivers had no knowledge of cheating in 2009 but recalled that Principal Barlow-Brown ridiculed Cernitha Battle for low test scores, and that every subsequent year Battles' scores improved. Rivers testified that Dr. Beverly Hall replaced former principal Cornelius Watts with Principal Barlow-Brown because of the low test scores under Watts.

C. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Karen Barlow-Brown (Principal)

Karen Barlow-Brown was the principal of Peyton Forest for seven years. She has no reason to believe anyone cheated at Peyton Forest. No one ever reported to her that there might be cheating on the CRCT and she has never heard rumors of cheating. She would not call teachers together to "erase stray marks" on tests because that is against her own belief system and personal integrity. She denied asking James if she received anything from Harris.

Principal Barlow-Brown did not offer any alternative explanation for Peyton Forest's extremely high number of erasures.

2. Cornelia Primous (Testing Coordinator)

Cornelia Primous was the counselor and testing coordinator at Peyton Forest in 2009. She denied knowledge of cheating.

She and Principal Barlow-Brown disagreed about where the tests should be sorted in 2009. Principal Barlow-Brown told Primous to sort them in the cafeteria but Primous argued that they needed to be sorted in a more secure location. The tests were sorted in a conference room and were stored in a room in the media center. She thinks that the only people with keys to that room were Librarian Cynthia Thomas and Principal Barlow-Brown.

She heard that Harris had a copy of the CRCT in 2008 prior to the administration of the 2009 test. Primous believes Principal Barlow-Brown fired teacher Ramona Rivers because she would not take a copy of the test.

Principal Barlow-Brown moved children who were "slower" to a separate room to be tested by Loretta Hairston. This was a testing violation, but Primous did not report it because she was intimidated by Principal Barlow-Brown and feared retribution.

3. Olivia Harris (Teacher)

Olivia Harris denied the allegations made by Cynthia James. Harris claimed that she downloaded practice test materials from the Georgia Department of Education website and provided the practice material to other teachers. GOSA compared the test allegedly given by Harris to James and confirmed it is a copy of the 2008 CRCT and not practice material.

Harris had three subjects flagged in 2010 as well.

4. Jamie Manning (Teacher)

Jamie Manning denied knowledge of cheating on the CRCT.

5. Cernitha Battle (Teacher)

Cernitha Battle denied knowledge of cheating on the CRCT.

6. Angela Campbell (Teacher)

Angela Campbell denied knowledge of cheating on the CRCT.

7. Enolar Callands (Teacher)

Enolar Callands denied knowledge of cheating on the CRCT.

8. Karen Patterson (Teacher)

Karen Patterson denied knowledge of cheating on the CRCT.

9. Milo Morris (Teacher)

Milo Morris denied knowledge of cheating on the CRCT.

10. Travis Brown (Teacher)

Travis Brown denied knowledge of cheating on the CRCT.

11. Bess Mae Paschal (Teacher)

Bess Mae Paschal denied knowledge of cheating on the CRCT.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

We conclude there was cheating at Peyton Forest on the CRCT and other tests. Olivia Harris had a copy of the 2008 CRCT and used it to prepare students for the 2009 CRCT. She also gave copies of the 2008 CRCT to other teachers. One teacher admitted she received a copy of the 2008 test, and the evidence indicates other teachers received a copy as well. We also conclude that teachers at Peyton Forest violated testing procedure because students who were not documented as special needs were tested separately from their homeroom by Enolar Callands and a retired teacher.

There is eyewitness testimony that Jamie Manning, Cernitha Battle, Angela Campbell, Enolar Callands, Karen Patterson, Milo Morris, Travis Brown, and Bess Mae Paschal cheated on the Fifth Grade Writing Test and APS benchmark tests in 2010. These teachers' extremely high wrong-to-right erasures on the 2009 CRCT lead us to conclude they cheated on the CRCT as well. We believe teachers were not truthful with investigators because they feared retaliation.

Finally, some students' high CRCT scores were not consistent with their actual abilities and teachers shared their concerns about this with Principal Barlow-Brown. There was a precipitous gain in CRCT scores in 2009 and a drop in 2010 (20 declines out of 21 subject comparisons).

Principal Barlow-Brown knew of the cheating this school. She knew that Olivia Harris had a copy of the 2008 CRCT. She should have known that teachers were cheating on the benchmarks and writing tests. Furthermore, Principal Barlow-Brown failed to ensure the ethical administration of and proper security for the 2009 CRCT. It is our conclusion from the statistical data and the other evidence that Principal Barlow-Brown failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT and adequately supervise testing activities and security. This resulted in, and she is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

We also conclude there were rule violations in the administration of the 2009 CRCT and that Testing Coordinator Cornelia Primous failed in her responsibility to provide a secure testing environment.

EAST LAKE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

145 4th Avenue SE
Atlanta, Georgia 30317

Principal: Gwendolyn Benton
Testing Coordinator: Fran Standifer

SRT-3 Executive Director: Dr. Gloria Patterson

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at East Lake Elementary in 2009 and in other years. Thirty-five people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Cheating at East Lake is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms and witness testimony. Principal Gwendolyn Benton and Testing Coordinator Fran Standifer erased and changed students' answers on the 2009 CRCT. They also altered the results of the Fifth Grade Writing Test. Principal Benton failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

A. 2009 vs. 2010

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	42	0
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	21	0
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	9(8)	0
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	7.1	0
High Flagged Standard Deviation	14.2	0
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.4	0

B. Flagged Classrooms

Teacher	Grade & Test	Standard Deviation
MILLER	1 RD	4.497074103
MILLER	1 LA	12.82386133
MILLER	1 MA	9.186071087
SMITH	1 RD	14.17018511
SMITH	1 LA	12.987849
SMITH	1 MA	11.56563203
OLIVE	2 RD	4.639239175
OLIVE	2 LA	6.699333434
HADLEY	3 RD	11.43460607
HADLEY	3 LA	4.064295785
HADLEY	3 MA	3.976207527
JONES ALLIE	3 LA	4.907894118
JONES ALLIE	3 MA	6.70508625
STAHL	3 LA	3.367696838
STAHL	3 MA	4.159624824
ROGERS MARTIN	4 RD	6.774758244
ROGERS MARTIN	4 LA	3.791735331
WASHINGTON	4 RD	8.709784986
WASHINGTON	4 LA	3.752489229
WASHINGTON	4 MA	6.136764455
WALLS	5 MA	4.452757051

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Overview

There are several facts which point to the conclusion that East Lake Elementary School was not managed to ensure that the 2009 CRCT results were accurately reported to the Georgia Department of Education.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 42% for the 2009 CRCT. With state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped significantly from 42% to 0%.

Second, of the 21 flagged classrooms at East Lake Elementary School, 11 (52% of the total) had standard deviations that exceeded five, and five classrooms exceeded ten standard deviations. At five standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard deviations the probability is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations from the state mean were, for a number of classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at East Lake Elementary School.

Third is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures at East Lake, 70.5% were produced by the flagged classrooms which account for only 42% of the total classrooms in the school.

Fourth, Principal Benton created an environment that encouraged cheating. She threatened teachers with PDPs if CRCT scores did not improve. She told her teachers to “do whatever we have to do even if it means breaking the rules” to make APS targets. She instilled fear of reprisal into her teachers so they would not report cheating at East Lake.

Finally, Principal Benton and Testing Coordinator Fran Standifer instructed teachers to arrange their students in a way that caused lower performing students to receive easier Fifth Grade Writing Tests.

B. Narrative

Principal Benton pressured teachers at East Lake to “find a way” to improve CRCT scores “even if it meant breaking the rules.” She threatened teachers with PDPs if CRCT scores did not improve. Teachers at East Lake did not voice concerns over testing irregularities and cheating for fear of reprisal against them by Principal Benton.

They cheated in three ways. First, Principal Benton instructed teachers to erase stray marks on their students’ answer sheets, and expected teachers to fill in answers to questions the students left blank, and erase an answer when the student bubbled in more than one answer selection.

Second, they erased wrong answers. Principal Benton required teachers to provide her with frequent updates on students’ benchmark testing progress. Principal Benton kept posters containing students’ testing data in her office, so she could easily identify the students who were

struggling. During the administration of the CRCT, Principal Benton required teachers to provide her with the names of students who failed the test – immediately after each section of the CRCT was administered. The only way for teachers to know which students failed was to review the tests right after the students completed them.

During the CRCT testing window, Principal Benton and Fran Standifer often met in Benton's office where the CRCT materials were stored for extended periods of time with the door closed. During the 2010 CRCT, however, when state monitors and security cameras were in the building, both Benton and Standifer left the building early. In 2010 Principal Benton told teachers that the newly-installed security cameras would make sure "nothing came back on her," referring to CRCT cheating.

Teachers described students whose skills and abilities did not correspond to their high CRCT scores. Teachers also described students who fell asleep or refused to complete portions of the CRCT, but met or exceeded expectations on the CRCT. One teacher testified that two of her students asked her if she would give them the answers for the CRCT "like our teacher did last year."

During the administration of the CRCT, a student complained to his teacher that his answer sheet was placed in his test booklet in a different spot than where he left it the previous day. The teacher examined the answer sheet and saw that it contained heavy erasures. As she examined the answer sheet, Principal Benton entered her classroom and instructed the teacher to put the answer sheet down. The next day Principal Benton transferred the teacher to kindergarten.

Third, Principal Benton and Fran Standifer devised a scheme to allow the lower performing students to receive the easiest questions for the Fifth Grade Writing Test. The tests were supposed to be handed out at random. Principal Benton and Fran Standifer instructed teachers to seat their students in a particular order and to hand out writing tests in a particular order. By pre-arranging the students and the tests, Principal Benton and Fran Standifer attempted to alter the results of the State writing test in 2009 and in other years.

Principal Benton interfered with and obstructed this investigation. She told teachers that the GBI was "putting words in people's mouths." She threatened teachers that she would "sue them out the ass," if any of them "slandered" her to the GBI. Teachers told GBI agents that they would not have testified truthfully to us if Principal Benton was still in charge of East Lake, for fear of retaliation.

C. Testimony of Witnesses

I. Claudia Abboud (Teacher)

After reviewing East Lake's wrong-to-right erasure data, Claudia Abboud believes cheating occurred on the CRCT at East Lake in 2009 and in other years; however, she does not think teachers cheated because teachers did not have time to erase students' answer sheets. Abboud noted that although East Lake's students met 100% of their APS targets on the 2008 CRCT, the students' abilities did not match these scores. She heard that another teacher

witnessed Principal Benton's car parked at the school over the weekend when the 2009 CRCT materials were in the building.

2. Morresia Withers (Media Specialist)

Morresia Withers remembers that Principal Benton and Standifer stayed late behind closed doors during the CRCT testing period in 2009 and other years. After a security camera was installed around Principal Benton's office for the 2010 testing window, however, Principal Benton and Standifer did not stay late at the school during the CRCT testing window.

Withers proctored the 2009 CRCT writing test in Stephanie Walls' classroom. She said that Principal Benton and Standifer instructed Withers and Walls to seat the students in a particular order for the Fifth Grade Writing Test. Withers explained the writing test was supposed to be handed out randomly, and the seating arrangement scheme ensured that the lowest performing students received the easiest writing question. Withers and Walls ignored Principal Benton and Standifer's instruction, but did not report the attempted violation to APS's testing hotline.

Withers said that APS had a "mafia atmosphere" and that employees feared retaliation if they spoke up. Principal Benton threatened to place teachers on PDPs for low CRCT scores, and stated: "We will do whatever it takes to make sure the students pass the test."

3. Raqketa Williams (Teacher)

On her first day at East Lake in 2009, Principal Benton told Raqketa Williams, "At East Lake we do whatever we have to do even if it means breaking the rules," pointed to the prior year's CRCT scores and said, "See the scores? East Lake makes its targets."

Williams recalls that Principal Benton referred to the new security cameras around her office during the 2010 CRCT testing window, and stated, "nothing is coming back on me," Williams understood Benton meant the security cameras would not show Principal Benton altering students' CRCT answer sheets.

Because of fear of reprisal by Principal Benton, Raqketa Williams would not have testified truthfully to us if Principal Benton was still at East Lake.

4. Stephanie Walls (Teacher)

Principal Benton instructed Stephanie Walls to create a seating chart for her students to be used during the 2010 Fifth Grade Writing Test. Principal Benton instructed Morresia Withers to pass out the writing test to Walls' students in a particular order. Walls explained that by passing the tests out in the order Principal Benton wanted, the lower performing students would receive easier writing questions. Walls and Withers discussed Principal Benton's instruction and decided to ignore it. They passed the tests out randomly.

Walls stated that another teacher, Rashida Davis, received similar instructions from Standifer and discussed the matter with Principal Benton. Walls is unaware of the outcome of that conversation.

5. Verna McGhee (Teacher)

Principal Benton asked each teacher which students met, exceeded, and failed to meet expectations after each daily session of the CRCT. Verna McGhee further testified that Principal Benton instructed teachers to erase stray marks on the CRCT answer sheets, and “expected” teachers to fill in answers for questions left blank, erase answers if the student bubbled in two or more answer choices, and fill in partially-filled circles. Principal Benton instructed teachers to never discuss the CRCT.

Another teacher, Viola Nears, told McGhee that the first and second grade teachers used voice inflection to prompt their students during administration of the CRCT.

In 2008, McGhee saw Principal Benton’s car parked at the school on a Saturday when the CRCT materials were in the building. McGhee noted that Principal Benton’s car was parked in the back of the building and this was unusual because Principal Benton always parked in the front of the building.

McGhee described a meeting between Principal Benton and teachers where Principal Benton stated that the GBI “was putting words in people’s mouths, and interrogating them.” Principal Benton further stated that her son was a lawyer, and that “if anyone slanders me I will sue them out the ass.” McGhee stated that she could only testify truthfully without fear of reprisal because Principal Benton was no longer employed at the school.

Former testing coordinator at East Lake, Royce Love-Diagne, once told McGhee, “Dr. Hall expects us to cheat.”

6. Marla Johnson (Teacher)

During the 2004 CRCT, Marla Johnson saw a proctor prompt students to change answers. She reported the violation to then-testing coordinator Royce Love-Diagne, but is unaware if any action was taken. Two of Marla Johnson’s students asked if she would give them the answers to the 2010 CRCT like their teachers did the previous year. Johnson had a student who exceeded on the CRCT one year and was placed on a PEC the next year for low performance.

Principal Benton threatened to place teachers on a PDP if their low CRCT scores did not improve. Johnson believes Principal Benton changed answers on the 2009 CRCT because teachers did not have access to the tests. Specifically, Johnson identified a Saturday when she volunteered at a Hands On Atlanta event at East Lake. The CRCT materials were in the building on that Saturday. All of the volunteers worked outside the school building except Principal Benton and her daughter, a teacher in Gwinnett County, who stayed in the building.

7. Kori Smith (Instructional Coach)

Principal Benton required teachers to provide her with a list of students who did not do well after each section of the CRCT.

Kori Smith recalled a student who failed every class but exceeded expectations on the CRCT. She believes that based on the student’s skills, his test score was not possible. Principal

Benton instructed Smith to change that student's classroom grades from failing to C's. Smith refused to change the grades. She later reviewed his file and noticed that someone else had changed his grades. Smith recognized the handwriting that made the changes as belonging to Principal Benton's secretary.

During one CRCT test session, a student complained to Smith that his answer sheet was in a different place in the test booklet than where he placed it the previous day. Smith examined the answer sheet and noticed that it had heavy erasures. As she was examining the answer sheet, Principal Benton entered her classroom. Principal Benton motioned for Kori Smith to put down the answer sheet. Smith was transferred to a kindergarten class the next day.

8. Cheryl Jones-Allie (Teacher)

Cheryl Jones-Allie identified one student who could not read on a third grade level but passed the CRCT. Jones-Allie did not believe that student was capable of passing the CRCT. Another student fell asleep during the reading section of the CRCT for the first half hour of the testing session, but passed that portion.

After reviewing her classroom's wrong-to-right erasure data, Jones-Allie stated that her students did not have time to make all the erasures on their test sheets during the testing period.

Another teacher told Jones-Allie that she had seen an administrator's car at the school building on a Sunday afternoon when the CRCT answer sheets were in the building.

9. Julie Rogers-Martin (Teacher)

Principal Benton kept charts and posters on her walls with the benchmark scores and previous CRCT scores for students, so she was aware of which students would perform poorly on the CRCT. Principal Benton threatened to place teachers on PDPs if their CRCT scores did not improve, and singled out teachers with low CRCT scores at meetings.

Julie Rogers-Martin recalled that 100% of her students met expectations on the Social Studies portion of the 2008 CRCT. She was surprised by this result because she knew that she did not focus on Social Studies throughout the school year, but focused on the AYP subjects of math, reading, and language arts.

Rogers-Martin had a student who could barely read in her class one year. She filled out paperwork to place him on a PEC but to her knowledge he was never placed on a PEC. That student failed the CRCT but was socially promoted to the third grade. Inexplicably, the student exceeded expectations on his third grade CRCT. He was then placed on a PEC in fourth grade.

In 2009, a student told Rogers-Martin that his previous teachers gave him answers on the CRCT. Rogers-Martin recalled two students who refused to complete sections of their 2009 CRCT. Both were removed from her classroom. Both passed the CRCT.

10. Shonda Fulton (Secretary)

Nobody is allowed to enter Principal Benton's office without first checking with Shonda Fulton. If the office door is shut, Fulton always knocks and waits for a response from Principal Benton before entering. If she receives no response, she will not enter the office. She recalls leaving between 4:00 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. during the weeks of CRCT testing, and that Principal Benton and Fran Standifer were often still meeting in Principal Benton's office.

11. John Stahl (Special Education)

Principal Benton required teachers to provide lists of students who they thought would not pass the CRCT. Principal Benton often told teachers to "find a way" for these students to pass the CRCT. She instructed teachers to "assign quotas, figure it out, and do what you gotta do," for students to pass the CRCT. John Stahl also heard that other teachers used voice inflection to prompt their students on the CRCT at East Lake.

12. John Young (Teacher)

Many of John Young's students' skills and abilities did not match their prior CRCT scores. He thinks that cheating happened at East Lake on the CRCT in 2009 and in other years, but stated that teachers could not cheat because they did not have time to erase and change students' answer sheets.

Young recalled one year at East Lake a "clean up the school" event was planned for the weekend when the CRCT materials would be in the school. A storm was predicted for that weekend, and many people asked Principal Benton to reschedule the event for a different weekend. Principal Benton insisted the event be held when the CRCT materials were in the building. John Young and other teachers at East Lake think Principal Benton changed answers on the CRCT over that weekend.

13. Rashida Davis (Teacher)

Many of Rashida Davis' students' skills did not match their previous CRCT scores. She recalls that in prior years, Fran Standifer and Principal Benton always stayed at the school late during the CRCT testing window. During the 2010 year, however, both Principal Benton and Standifer left early during the Fifth Grade Writing Test.

One year Standifer and Principal Benton instructed Davis to prepare a seating chart for her students to sit in during the Fifth Grade Writing Test. She prepared a seating chart based on her knowledge of students' relationships to one another to minimize disruption during the test. Principal Benton and Standifer revised the seating chart heavily, and provided Davis with specific instructions as to how to pass out the Fifth Grade Writing Test. Davis believes that the instructions for passing out the Fifth Grade Writing Test were to make certain that lower performing students received easier Fifth Grade Writing Tests.

D. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Fran Standifer (Testing Coordinator)

Testing Coordinator Fran Standifer described Principal Benton as overbearing. Standifer was forbidden to count CRCT materials or place those materials in bins without Principal Benton present. Standifer did not have a key to Principal Benton's office where the CRCT materials were stored.

Standifer purchased pencils and erasers for distribution at East Lake during the CRCT. When she collected the erasers they were extremely worn. Fran Standifer denies any knowledge of cheating.

2. Royce Love-Diagne (Former Testing Coordinator)

Royce Love-Diagne recalled Principal Benton often stating "teachers need to get their students to pass the CRCT by any means necessary." She denied ever instructing teachers to cheat on the CRCT.

3. Gwendolyn Benton (Principal)

Principal Benton denied any knowledge of cheating on the CRCT at East Lake. She opined that all erasing done on the CRCT in 2009 was done by the students. She stated that for the fourth grade reading portion of the CRCT, East Lake's scores only dropped one percentage point between 2009 and 2010. Since no classes were flagged in 2010 for having high wrong-to-right erasures, and the scores in one section for one grade did not drop, Principal Benton believes that proves there was no cheating at East Lake in 2009.

Principal Benton denied telling a new teacher, "At East Lake we do whatever we have to do even if it means breaking the rules." She denied that she instructed Kori Smith to put down a student answer sheet, as Kori Smith described, and did not transfer her to kindergarten in retaliation.

E. Other Evidence

On April 13, 2010, anonymous staff members at East Lake Elementary sent a letter to SRT-3 Executive Director Robin Hall detailing the oppressive environment created by Principal Benton, and describing cheating and testing violations at East Lake. A copy of that letter is included as **Attachment A**. Robin Hall contacted Kathy Augustine and described the letter. Augustine told Robin Hall that APS previously investigated the matter, and instructed her to take no action. A copy of Robin Hall's letter to Millicent Few describing Augustine's instructions is included as **Attachment B**.

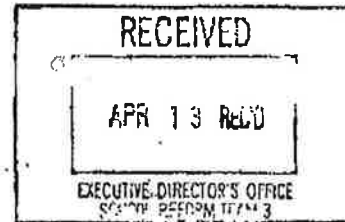
IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

We conclude that Principal Benton and Fran Standifer erased and changed student answer sheets on the 2009 CRCT and in other years. We further conclude that Principal Benton and

Fran Standifer altered the results of the Fifth Grade Writing Test in 2009 and other years by manipulating the distribution of the writing test.

It is also our conclusion from the statistical data and the other evidence secured in this investigation, that Principal Benton failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT and adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and she is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

11-19-10P12:47 RCVD



To: Dr. Robyn Hall
 From: East Lake's Staff (present and former)
 Date: March 3, 2010

Welcome to SRT3. We at East Lake have decided to tell the truth concerning the Erasure Analysis. It is not our intent to embarrass the Atlanta School Board or Dr. Beverly Hall. We know as well as the powers to be that there is validity to these findings, no one would ever tell a student to cross out on their answer sheet and then erase. They are instructed to use all of their testing strategies within the booklet. We can't speak for any other school but we can certainly state facts about East Lake Elementary. We are losing about half of our staff because the system did not do anything to Mrs. Benton when she committed FORGERY. She was given a slap on the wrist and told not to do it again. It was stated that if it became public knowledge that it would affect not only her but others as well. Where is your INTERGRITY? The system allowed the BEAST to roam freely and she has destroyed everything in her path. One can only assume that Dr. Hall (superintendent) will allow anyone to stay as long as they make her look good regardless of what they do or say. We have or had to deal with her on a daily basis and it is or was not pleasant. Everyone (parents, teachers, ILS's, students) told you about her but you simply ignored it. You all started the fire so we are going to put it out! How DARE you have some one stand before us and say that she is for the children. She like the rest is only for HERSELF, and in the process the staff has or had to work under someone that we don't or didn't RESPECT or TRUST. We are only extending Atlanta this courtesy because none has ever been extended to us. This information will be passed on to the Governor's office as well as the press. We have agreed to take Polygraphs because she will deny everything. Here are some of the CRCT testing irregularities that took place at East Lake. We strongly suggest that you send her to another school so that everyone will stay. Trust us; they ARE leaving or DID leave because of her. People are trying to find jobs not lose them. The situation here is that BAD!

- Threats if your scores showed where the children actually were and not where she wanted them to be. (making your targets)
- Intimidation if you ever disagree or disagreed with her. (The Miller and Love-Juan cases)
- Questions: Such as how many of your students are testing on level three during the actual testing period? (asked by Mrs. Benton)
- Moving teachers from upper grades to lower grades if their students didn't make the targets or vice-versa.
- A War Room where all students had to be listed under each level by the teachers. Therefore, making it easier (for her) to erase answers from wrong to right on students listed under levels two and three without suspicion.
- Teachers being allowed to see a copy of the test during make-up testing.
- Coming on the weekend parking her car behind the building. The students' tests and answer sheets are locked in a room in her office.



ATLANTA
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Making A Difference

ROBIN C. HALL, D.A.H.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

K-8 SCHOOL REFORM TEAM-3
1681 LAFRANCOR STREET, N. E.
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30307

PHONE (404) 802-3751
FAX: (404) 802-8894; 404-378-8616-TEAM FAX

November 22, 2010

TO: Millicent Few, Chief Human Resources Officer

FROM: Robin C. Hall, D.A. H. *rch*
Executive Director, SRT 3

Re: East Lake Letter Received April 13, 2010

On April 13, 2010, I received a letter regarding concerns at East Lake to include actions by the principal and climate at the school that may have resulted in unethical testing practices. I then contacted my immediate supervisor, Dr. Kathy Augustine, to inform her of this letter. She asked who the letter was from and I indicated that it stated from former and current staff of East Lake. Dr. Augustine replied that she had received correspondence about East Lake from the same sender (former and current staff of East Lake) and that all complaints were investigated. At that time, I was not advised to take any further action. Therefore, I gave the letter to Sharon Curtis to file.

If additional clarification is needed, please do not hesitate to let me know.

RCH:sac

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

- Maya Angelou

APS-OIR 05382

COOK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

211 Memorial Drive SE
Atlanta, GA 30312-2021

Principal: LaPaul Shelton
Testing Coordinator: Carla Ross

SRT-3 Executive Director: Dr. Gloria Patterson

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Cook Elementary in 2009 and in previous years. Twenty-one people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Two teachers confessed to cheating. Cheating is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms, confessions, and witness testimony. Principal LaPaul Shelton provided low performing students with accommodations which were not allowed. Principal Shelton knew of cheating by teachers. He confirmed at least one eyewitness report of cheating on the CRCT, but took no action against the teacher. Principal LaPaul Shelton failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

A. 2009 vs. 2010

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	40.7	5
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	22	3
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	10(8)	3(0)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	7.4	3.2
High Flagged Standard Deviation	23.6	3.3
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.1	3.1

B. Flagged Classrooms

Teacher	Grade & Test	Standard Deviation
ANDERSON	3 LA	4.376594004
NELSON LYNCH	3 LA	5.07848474
NELSON LYNCH	3 MA	4.551656176
VAN WALKER	3 RD	5.801215391
VAN WALKER	3 LA	3.6491074
VAN WALKER	3 MA	3.339858491
WILLIAMS	3 RD	4.666014429
WILLIAMS	3 LA	5.713336681
WILLIAMS	3 MA	3.379414277
REIMNITZ	4 RD	6.630912183
REIMNITZ	4 MA	3.88169777
ROBERTSON	4 RD	5.200395825
ROBERTSON	4 LA	3.837983558
ROBERTSON	4 MA	3.065196438
WATKIS	4 RD	4.791002758
OFOSUHENE	5 RD	14.4839867
OFOSUHENE	5 LA	10.99026074
OFOSUHENE	5 MA	17.75189629
VASSAN	5 LA	3.917899606
VASSAN	5 MA	11.5343103
WEEMS	5 RD	13.1011272
WEEMS	5 MA	23.63884013

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Overview

There are several facts which point to the conclusion that Cook Elementary School was not managed to ensure that the 2009 CRCT results were accurately reported to the Georgia Department of Education.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 40.7% for the 2009 CRCT. There were only 23 schools in APS with a higher percentage in 2009.

Second, of the approximately 1,800 non-APS schools in the state taking the 2009 CRCT only nine schools had a higher percentage of flagged classrooms than Cook Elementary School.

Third, with state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped from 40.7% to 5%.

Fourth, of the 22 flagged classrooms at Cook Elementary School, 11 (50% of the total) had standard deviations that exceeded five, and six classrooms exceeded ten standard deviations. At five standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard deviations the probability is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations from the state mean were, for a number of classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at this school.

Fifth is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures, 68% were produced by the flagged classrooms which account for only 40.7% of the total classrooms in the school.

Sixth, testing protocols were not followed at Cook. Principal Shelton, Cheryl Dumas, and Terri Smith pulled low performing students from their regular classrooms and administered the CRCT to them separately in a room with the door closed and windows covered. Many of these students' answer sheets have high wrong-to-right erasures.

Finally, two teachers confessed to cheating at Cook. Principal Shelton knew cheating occurred, but instead of reporting it, he erased and changed the previously changed answers.

B. Narrative

In 2008 and 2009, cheating occurred at Cook Elementary through various means. Two teachers, Deborah Weems and Kwabena Ofusuhene, confessed to erasing and changing student answers in the parent conference room while they were supposed to be erasing stray marks. Weems changed answers for her own class, as well as other teachers' classes. Weems used a "go by" test from a student who she knew would "exceed" on the test. Weems used a transparency created for one of the test forms. Weems and Ofusuhene also prompted students and directed them to the right answers during administration of the test, causing students to erase and change their own answers.

Teachers cheated because they feared for their jobs if they failed to make targets or AYP. Principal Shelton constantly reminded teachers that if they could not make AYP, they should not be in the profession and threatened teachers with PDPs for failure to meet targets. He also publicly humiliated and demeaned teachers in faculty meetings if their students performed poorly.

Principal Shelton should have been on notice of potential cheating when numerous teachers complained that their students' performance in class and on diagnostic tests did not match their performance on the CRCT the prior year. Principal Shelton knew that teachers at Cook were cheating and covered it up. A teacher reported to Shelton that she witnessed another teacher change one of her student's answers, and suspected others were changed as well. Shelton retrieved the students' tests and confirmed the answers had been changed, so he changed the students' new, correct answers back to the original wrong answer. Despite his assurance that he would handle the situation, Principal Shelton never addressed the accused teacher, filed an OIR report or took other action.

Principal Shelton also violated testing protocols by pulling students out of class and testing them in the afternoon in small groups outside of the normal testing period. The students, tested in a room with the window covered and door closed, were typically low performers but were not entitled to special accommodations. Principal Shelton asked teachers to provide him with a list of students in their class who were low performers or behavior problems. He also allowed some students to "re-take" sections of the CRCT if, according to their teacher, they were distracted or did not perform well during the morning testing session.

A review of the student data reveals that several students who Shelton pulled out for small group testing had very high wrong-to-right erasures. Moreover, several flagged teachers testified that the erasure analysis indicated that they tested more students than they actually did because Principal Shelton pulled students from these teachers' classes and tested them elsewhere.

C. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Deborah Weems (Teacher)

In 2008 and 2009, Deborah Weems cheated on the CRCT by erasing and changing student answers and by giving students answers during testing. Weems admitted to cheating and said she felt pressured to cheat by Principal Shelton. Principal Shelton told teachers that if they could not make AYP, then they needed to look for another profession. Shelton never told Weems to cheat, but it was understood that it needed to be done. Principals could be put on PDPs if the school failed to perform. The principal would then put teachers on the "chopping block" and APS would "blacklist" them. Shelton felt it was very important to be "on the floor" and get recognized during the annual Convocation ceremony.

During testing, Weems improperly assisted her students. She told her students in advance that if she walked by them and told them they needed to check their answer or if she called out that a certain question needed to be reviewed again, that was a signal that they had the

answer wrong. Then Weems would walk back to the student and look at the question again. If she walked away, that meant the student had the answer correct.

Teachers erased stray marks from the tests before turning them in. While “erasing stray marks,” Weems changed students’ answers for the tests on her grade level, as well as others. In 2009, Weems changed answers with Kwabena Ofusuhene, a fellow fifth grade teacher. When changing answers, Weems used a “go-by” or key. In 2008, the former media specialist, Tiffonia Lamar-Sanders, gave her answers for the tests. Weems suspected they may have come from tests of students who were late or absent and were tested separately. Weems and Ofusuhene looked over the tests at the end of each test day so they would not get “backlogged” while they made the changes.

Weems does not believe that Testing Coordinator Carla Ross knew about the cheating. Ross left the parent room where the teachers were erasing stray marks so the teachers could stay in the room with the tests as long as they wanted. In 2009, Ofusuhene distracted Ross so that Weems could change answers on the tests.

In 2009, Daniela Vassan was present in the room while Weems and Ofusuhene changed answers. Vassan told Weems she was tempted to fill in one of her student’s answers, but did not do it. Weems took the test from Vassan and filled in the answer.

She thinks that Jacinta Williams and Amanda Lynch may also have changed student answers. She saw them erasing.

Weems denied that she was ever approached by Principal Shelton regarding any allegations of cheating made against her.

2. Kwabena Ofusuhene (Teacher)

Kwabena Ofusuhene admitted that while “erasing stray marks” in the parent center, he erased and changed student answers. Weems provided him with the answers to the test for the math section and he used it to “fix answers.” Weems knew which of her students would exceed on the test and used one of their answer sheets as a guideline. He denied changing answers on other teachers’ papers.

He heard that the third grade teachers “fixed” answers.

3. Tiffonia Lamar-Sanders (Former Media Specialist)

During the four or five years she was at Cook, Principal Shelton pulled students for small group testing. These students were typically behavioral problems or had “test anxiety.”

4. Jacinta Williams (Teacher)

Jacinta Williams saw Weems take a sheet from Daniela Vassan and fill in a student answer. In 2009, Weems and Ofusuhene stayed in the parent conference room much longer than other teachers to erase stray marks. Williams denied changing any answers.

Principal Shelton came to Williams at the end of each test day and inquired how she thought her students performed. She informed Shelton which students did not complete, or who were distracted, during the test. Principal Shelton, Tiffonia Lamar-Sanders and Cheryl Dumas pulled those students out of class later that day and gave them additional time to complete the test. None of those students had an Individualized Education Plan.

Prior to testing, Williams' team created a list of lower achieving students and provided it to Principal Shelton. Shelton then had these students tested in small groups. These students did not have an Individualized Education Plan either.

5. Amanda Lynch (Teacher)

During the 2009 CRCT, Daniela Vassan told Amanda Lynch that she suspected Weems had changed Vassan's students' test answers. Lynch told Vassan to report it to Shelton. Vassan later told Lynch she reported it to Principal Shelton and he changed the answers back to the original answers.

Lynch was surprised by one student's high test scores because he did not know all of his letter sounds. He passed the reading portion of the test.

Principal Shelton pulled students from Lynch's class for small group testing. Lynch selected which students would most benefit from this environment. Typically, those were students who had behavior problems. On one occasion, Shelton pulled a student from her class after the testing period was over and allowed the girl to retake the test. He explained to Lynch that this student did not perform well, so he was going to re-administer a section of the test to her. Lynch denied changing any answers.

6. Cheryl Dumas (Teacher)

During the 2009 CRCT, Cheryl Dumas administered the test to a small group of eight to ten fourth grade girls. Teachers selected which students should be tested away from their peers. No monitor was present during these sessions.

7. Carla Brice Ross (Testing Coordinator)

Carla Ross denied any knowledge of cheating. She became visibly upset when confronted with the statistical results of the wrong-to-right erasure analysis. Ross said that teachers for third, fourth and fifth grades were not supposed to clean up stray marks since the students were required to do so before turning in the tests.

8. Daniela Vassan (Teacher)

The 2008-2009 school year was Daniela Vassan's first year in APS. During the 2009 CRCT, Vassan witnessed cheating. During the testing week, Vassan returned her tests to the parent center at the end of the day. She noticed that a student left a question blank on the section. Weems looked up the problem in the test booklet, solved it, and told Vassan the correct answer to bubble in. Vassan refused, so Weems filled in the answer on the student's answer

sheet herself. Vassan retrieved the answer sheet from Weems and erased the answer Weems improperly marked. She then turned in her tests and left the parent center.

Two hours later, Weems and Osufuhane were still in the parent center. Vassan went to the testing coordinator and asked to verify her test booklet count. When she pulled the student's answer sheet that Weems had bubbled in, Vassan noticed it had been changed again. She also noticed eraser marks on other students' tests as well, and the tests were out of alphabetical order as she had left them.

Vassan reported the situation to Principal Shelton. Shelton pulled the test documents of the students whose answers Vassan believed had been changed. Shelton then erased those students' new, correct answers and changed them back to the original wrong answer. Vassan did not report Shelton's actions to anyone at that time, as she did not feel comfortable reporting him to the SRT Executive Director. However, in December 2010, she reported the incident to her new Principal, Sharon Briscoe, who took over for Shelton when APS promoted him to Best Academy. Briscoe filed an OIR report.

At the end of each test day, Principal Shelton asked Vassan how her students performed or inquired whether she had any that were inattentive or sleepy. Shelton later pulled those students from class. Shelton also pulled a group of fourth grade boys for testing in a small group. Those students did not have an IEP.

9. Tawanna Robertson (Teacher)

Tawanna Robertson believed that her fourth graders' prior test scores (from third grade) did not accurately reflect their abilities. Robertson expressed her concerns to Principal Shelton. Principal Shelton advised her to teach the students and get them to the level where they should be rather than harp on what they did not know.

Robertson reviewed the erasure analysis data for her class. She could not provide any explanation for the high erasures, but she was certain that her students did not erase that many answers in her classroom. Robertson also indicated that the erasure analysis did not accurately reflect the number of students in her class. She administered the test to 15 students, but the erasure analysis showed that she tested 20. In 2009, Principal Shelton called several students out of her class for "small group testing" with himself or Cheryl Dumas.

10. Lesma Watkis (Teacher)

Lesma Watkis taught at Cook from 2001 until 2010. During the 2009 CRCT, Principal Shelton pulled seven or eight students out of her class for "behavioral issues" and tested them in small groups.

Shelton also tested certain third and fifth graders in small groups. This "small group testing" occurred in the afternoon, after the normal testing period ended, in a classroom with the door closed and the window covered with paper.

In addition to pulling "behavioral students," Terri Smith, a substitute teacher who assisted with the CRCT, asked Watkis for a student who performed well in math to be pulled out at the

same time. Watkis only administered the 2009 CRCT to ten or eleven students, but the erasure analysis flagged a classroom of 20 students.

Watkis believed that cheating occurred on the CRCT because some students who passed the CRCT were not functioning on their grade level and failed in class. These students performed poorly on diagnostic tests (benchmark tests), but performed well in reading and math on the CRCT. Osmond, Dye, Reimnitz and Robertson expressed their concern about this inconsistency to Watkis as well. Watkis told her concerns to Principal Shelton, explaining that her students especially struggled with reading. The very same students that Watkis informed Shelton were struggling in reading ended up being the students Shelton pulled for small group testing. Watkis is only flagged in one class – reading.

Principal Shelton ridiculed teachers whose students did not perform well on the CRCT. When CRCT scores came out, Shelton publicly singled out teachers in a meeting and told them they did not need to be at Cook if their students did not perform better. Teachers could be placed on a PDP or lose their jobs for poor student performance.

Just prior to testing, Principal Shelton held a meeting in the auditorium and reiterated that the teachers were expected to do “everything possible” to ensure the students passed. Some teachers expressed concern to Watkis that they felt that Shelton wanted them to cheat in order for the students to pass.

11. Nancy Milledge (Teacher at Best Academy)

Nancy Milledge was a teacher at Best Academy during 2009-2010 school years where LaPaul Shelton is currently the Principal. Milledge reported that during the 2009-2010 CRCT, Principal Shelton pulled students for small group testing under the guise of “behavioral issues.” Milledge reported this as a testing problem during the 2009-2010 year because she believed it was disruptive when Principal Shelton came into the classroom to pull out students during testing. She knew those students were tested elsewhere.

D. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. LaPaul Shelton (Principal)

Shelton became Principal at Cook in the 2004-2005 school year. He confirmed that he put pressure on the teachers to meet APS targets.

Shelton denied any knowledge of, or participation in, cheating or violations reported to him with regard to the CRCT. He claimed he could not recall Daniela Vassan coming to him with concerns that her students’ test answers had been changed by Deborah Weems. He could not recall erasing those students’ answers and changing them back to the original answers as marked in the students’ test booklets. He also did not recall pulling a student from Amanda Lynch’s class to be re-tested.

Principal Shelton stated that he tested students in small groups who came to school late or were absent during testing. He initially denied pulling students who were “behavioral problems,” but ultimately admitted that he tested some of these students in small groups. He

chose these students based upon data, performance and the recommendation of the teacher. Shelton admitted to asking teachers for a list of students who were not performing well, but explained that he used that list to determine which students needed individual attention throughout the year.

Shelton also admitted that teachers reported to him that some students were not performing in class at the same high level they performed on the CRCT, but he explained it was due to a “high mobility rate” at Cook.

When confronted with the erasure analysis data, he reluctantly admitted that cheating was one explanation.

E. Other Evidence

- In 2006-2007, 2007-2008, and 2008-2009, Cook met AYP.
- In 2010, after Principal Shelton was transferred to Best Academy, Cook did not meet AYP.
- In 2010, after Principal Shelton was transferred to Best Academy, the classes flagged at Cook for wrong-to-right erasures dropped dramatically from 40.7% to 5%.
- At Best Academy, where APS transferred Shelton, the percent of classes flagged increased from 3.9% in 2009 to 19.4% in 2010, with Shelton as Principal. Best was the only school in the district that increased its percentage of classes flagged in 2010 by double digits.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

We conclude that Principal Shelton cheated by pulling students for small group testing who were not entitled to accommodations. Cheryl Dumas and Terri Smith assisted Principal Shelton in his cheating scheme. Deborah Weems and Kwabena Osufuhane cheated on the CRCT by erasing and changing student answers for their class as well as other classes. Principal Shelton knew Weems erased and changed answers but took no action. The cheating occurred in 2008 and 2009.

Although no direct evidence exists that Dr. Carla Ross, the testing coordinator, knew of or condoned cheating, we conclude that Dr. Ross failed to follow testing protocols, and thereby allowed cheating to occur.

It is our conclusion, from the statistical data and the other evidence secured in this investigation, that Principal Shelton failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT, and adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and he is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

WOODSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

1605 Donald Lee Hollowell Pkwy. NE
Atlanta, GA 30318

Principal: Dr. Viola Blackshear
Testing Coordinator: Ketchia Smith

SRT-4 Executive Director: Tamara Cotman

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Woodson Elementary in 2009. Fifty-five people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Two teachers confessed to cheating. Cheating at Woodson is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms, confessions, witness testimony, and Principal Viola Blackshear's refusal to answer our questions. Principal Viola Blackshear answered our questions during her first interview, but during her second interview, she refused to answer questions and instead asserted her Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination. Principal Viola Blackshear failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

A. 2009 vs. 2010

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	63.3	15.7
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	38	10
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	16(13)	4(3)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	7.9	6.6
High Flagged Standard Deviation	15.8	10.8
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.4	3.2

B. Flagged Classrooms

Teacher	Grade & Test	Standard Deviation
GAMBLE	1 MA	4.274325147
LADIPO	1 RD	6.996825212
LADIPO	1 LA	9.802024308
LADIPO	1 MA	5.006408649
PICKETT	1 RD	7.614992557
PICKETT	1 LA	15.73260912
PICKETT	1 MA	13.41230842
SMITH	1 LA	4.132890062
SMITH	1 MA	4.547985923
DANIELS	2 RD	6.398818908
DANIELS	2 LA	3.999849742
DANIELS	2 MA	4.811222851
KING	2 RD	3.866378599
LEE DAVIS	2 MA	4.948431478
KIRKLAND	3 RD	11.40088789
KIRKLAND	3 LA	8.725414963
STARKS	3 RD	5.867326539
STARKS	3 LA	5.329997169
STARKS	3 MA	6.674076464
WOODSON	3 RD	12.82810116
WOODSON	3 LA	9.748608194
WOODSON	3 MA	12.82614325
BAUGH	4 RD	6.73483161
BAUGH	4 LA	4.886074383
BAUGH	4 MA	5.760674426
COLEMAN	4 LA	4.603220731
COLEMAN	4 MA	4.170944435
STROZIER	4 RD	15.55542851
STROZIER	4 LA	15.83102627
STROZIER	4 MA	10.45287493
JOHNSON	5 RD	10.58464209
JOHNSON	5 LA	4.995338884
JOHNSON	5 MA	15.43702794
MOSS	5 RD	3.393715479
MOSS	5 LA	8.948834018
MOSS	5 MA	6.585089103
WARTHEN	5 RD	8.999403937
WARTHEN	5 LA	6.008572654

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Overview

There are several significant facts which point to the conclusion that Woodson Elementary School was not managed to ensure that the 2009 CRCT results were accurately reported.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 63.3% for the 2009 CRCT. There were only 13 schools in APS with a higher percentage in 2009.

Second, of the approximately 1,800 non-APS schools in the state taking the 2009 CRCT, only two had a higher percentage of flagged classrooms than Woodson Elementary School.

Third, with state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped significantly from 63.3% to 15.7%.

Fourth, of the 38 flagged classrooms at Woodson, 26 (68% of the total) had standard deviations that exceeded five, and ten classrooms exceeded ten standard deviations. At five standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard deviations, the probability is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations from the state mean were, for a number of classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at Woodson.

Fifth is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures at Woodson, 87.8% were produced by the flagged classrooms which account for only 63.3% of the total classrooms in the school.

Last, two teachers admitted to prompting students to erase and change answers during the administration of the 2009 CRCT. Testing Coordinator Dixon instructed teachers to seat students strategically so students could copy one another's work on the CRCT. Principal Blackshear refused to answer questions about cheating at Woodson and asserted her Fifth Amendment right to remain silent in response to every question. A copy of the questions Principal Blackshear refused to answer is included as **Attachment A**.

B. Narrative

Principal Viola Blackshear is the principal at Woodson. Prior to the 2009 CRCT, Woodson made AYP, but failed to meet targets. As a result, Dr. Blackshear was on a PDP at the time of the 2009 CRCT.

In 2009, teachers cheated on the CRCT at Woodson by using non-verbal signals to assist students, or strategically seated students so that they could cheat off of each other. One teacher cheated at the suggestion of Instructional Liaison Specialist Debra Dixon. Dixon, as well as Testing Coordinator Ketchia Smith and Principal Viola Blackshear, denied knowledge of or participation in cheating.

No one at Woodson confessed to erasing or changing answers, but two teachers confessed to cheating in other ways. However, when Principal Blackshear was interviewed, she asserted her Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination in response to every question, including specific questions about whether she erased and changed answer documents. It is undisputed that Dr. Blackshear had twenty-four hour access to the tests and habitually stayed at the school after hours.

Throughout the school year and in the weeks leading up to the CRCT, Principal Blackshear and Dixon tracked how the teachers expected each student to perform on the CRCT – meets, exceeds, or not meets. Teachers used these “projection sheets” to determine where to focus instruction for each student. Administrators used these “projection sheets” to determine if the school would make AYP or targets. The erasure analysis data reveals a correlation in some flagged classes between students on a teacher's “not meets” list and the students with the highest number of wrong-to-right erasures.

C. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Deloris Pickett (Teacher)

Deloris Pickett worked in APS for 41 years and retired after the 2008-2009 school year. Initially, Pickett denied doing anything to contribute to the high volume of erasures on her students' test documents, but ultimately admitted that she may have frowned or looked at students with displeasure when they missed questions. Pickett believed her actions likely caused the students to erase and change their answers.

2. Ashlyn Strozier (Teacher)

Ashlyn Strozier admitted to cheating on the 2009 CRCT by seating students so that students with the same test form could cheat off of each other's test. Debra Dixon suggested that the teachers strategize and seat the students so that they could cheat off of one another's paper. Strozier also admitted to prompting students by giving them a certain look when she saw them missing questions. Strozier knew that Celestia Baugh also seated her students strategically because they discussed it.

To assist the teachers in reaching targets and AYP, the teachers were required to prepare projection sheets that reflect which students the teacher expected would meet, exceed or not meet expectations on the CRCT. The teachers prepared this data several times a year. The most recent set of "projections" would be turned over to the administrators approximately six weeks before the CRCT. The school administrators also used these projections to determine if the school would make AYP and targets.

The 2008-2009 school year was Strozier's first year at Woodson, but she quickly noticed that her students' performance in class did not match their passing CRCT scores from the prior year. Strozier believed her students' scores had been inflated. Two particular students exceeded in reading and language arts on the CRCT in the third grade, but when Strozier taught them in fourth grade, she had to tutor them because they could not read. Strozier had several students who passed certain subjects on the CRCT that should not have. She especially questioned one student's scores in reading and language arts when the student could not read.

In 2010, Strozier informed Principal Blackshear that her students' previous CRCT scores had been inflated because there was no way the students in her class achieved the test results reflected from the previous year. Principal Blackshear told her she did not know what happened.

When the news broke about the 2009 CRCT erasure analysis, Principal Blackshear held a meeting with the teachers to "calm them down". During that meeting, Principal Blackshear warned teachers to be careful what they said to people outside of the school. Principal Blackshear reminded the teachers that the tests were kept in a secure area in her office, which was a vault, and that she knew, and the teachers knew, that she did not touch any of the tests. She also reminded the teachers that she instructed them during the week of testing to leave the school as soon as school ended, and that they were not allowed to report to the school on weekends during the testing window. Principal Blackshear stressed the importance of knowing the testing rules and reminded the teachers of the process of elimination testing strategies used at

Woodson. Strozier interpreted the meeting by Blackshear as an opportunity for Blackshear to prepare the teachers for any upcoming interviews.

Principal Blackshear is now on a PDP for having low test scores for a third year in a row.

3. Jeannie Collins (Front Office Staff)

Only Principal Blackshear, Ms. Crawford (secretary), Testing Coordinator Ketchia Smith, Brandon Green (paraprofessional) and Collins have alarm codes to the building.

4. Edith Ladipo (Teacher)

Edith Ladipo provided a list of students to ILS Dixon that delineated which students she believed would fail the CRCT. Ladipo recalled being shocked that one of her students passed.

On the morning of the day Ladipo was subpoenaed for an interview by the GBI, Principal Blackshear provided Ladipo with a list of her students from the 2008-2009 school year. This document reflected how her students had performed on the CRCT. Ladipo confirmed that Principal Blackshear was aware that Ladipo was to be interviewed the same day.

5. Brandon Green (Paraprofessional)

Brandon Green assisted with after school programs and Saturday school. During the CRCT, he was a hallway monitor. Due to his weekend responsibilities, he had 24 hour key card access. During the CRCT, Principal Blackshear told him not to come to the school on weekends or let anyone else into the school.

Green typically reported to work between 6:30 a.m. and 6:45 a.m. Jeannie Collins, Principal Blackshear and Ketchia Smith also arrive around 6:30 a.m. Debra Dixon would arrive around 7:30 a.m.

Principal Blackshear often stayed late in the evening to work, but Green did not recall if he saw anyone staying late during the 2009 testing window.

6. Ketchia Smith (Testing Coordinator)

Ketchia Smith does not believe any cheating occurred at Woodson. Smith has worked with Principal Blackshear for five or six years and has been the testing coordinator since 2002. After the reports came out alleging cheating in APS, Principal Blackshear held a meeting with the staff. Smith believed the purpose of the meeting was to encourage teachers not to alarm the students. Smith does not recall Principal Blackshear reminding the teachers that the tests were kept in a vault, that she made them leave at the end of each day, that she did not allow anyone at the school on weekends during testing, that Principal Blackshear did not handle the tests herself, or that teachers should refresh their memory on testing procedures. Smith confirmed that Principal Blackshear talked about testing strategies during that meeting.

Smith was not aware that Principal Blackshear met with teachers and provided them with students' CRCT data prior to the teachers appearing for our interviews. Smith said it would be unusual for Blackshear to provide this information.

During the 2009 CRCT, teachers picked up their test at 7:45 a.m. Smith conceded this early pickup meant that the teachers had the tests in their possession an hour and fifteen minutes before testing began, but Smith denied suggesting the teachers do anything unethical with the tests. The teachers were not allowed to erase stray marks without being monitored. Smith stored the test documents in Principal Blackshear's conference room overnight. Smith and Principal Blackshear were the only people with keys to the conference room where the tests were stored. Principal Blackshear had 24 hour access to the building, but Smith was unsure of whether she had limits on her card. She left the school each day at 3:00 p.m.

Smith denied participating in, or having knowledge of, cheating or testing irregularities. She could not explain the high number of wrong-to-right erasures for many students.

D. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Dr. Viola Blackshear (Principal)

When confronted by the GBI about meeting with teachers in advance of their interviews, Blackshear denied providing teachers with CRCT data analysis for the purpose of assisting them in interviews. She stated that several teachers approached her after their interviews with the GBI and asked for their data. Blackshear prepared the CRCT data analysis because she needed to justify the drop in test scores to her Executive Director, Tamara Cotman. Blackshear attributed the drop in scores to new programs in reading and math.

When interviewed by the GBI, Principal Blackshear denied knowledge of, or participating in, cheating. However, when we interviewed her, Principal Blackshear refused to answer questions and asserted her Fifth Amendment rights to all questions asked.

2. Celesia Baugh (Teacher)

Celesia Baugh denied cheating. She further denied seating students in a particular order or being instructed to do so. However, Baugh explained that the high numbers of wrong-to-right erasures must be a result of someone altering the tests. Although students do erase, Baugh does not believe that her students erased to the degree shown by the erasure analysis.

Baugh recalls Principal Blackshear telling teachers she believed the investigation to be a "witch hunt" and that innocent people would get hurt. Blackshear stated she was glad that everyone left school on time during test week. Blackshear mentioned certain common sense things during that meeting that did not need to be pointed out. For example, Principal Blackshear mentioned that the tests were locked up and then discussed the testing strategies used at Woodson – the process of elimination and marking C as a placeholder if a student wanted to skip a question and come back to it.

Baugh confirmed that she provided projection sheets to Principal Blackshear and Dixon in the weeks leading up to the CRCT.

3. Debra Dixon (Instructional Liaison Specialist)

Debra Dixon was the Instructional Liaison Specialist at Woodson from 2005 until November 2010 when she became the interim Principal at Usher Elementary. While at Woodson, Dixon assisted with the CRCT as a hall monitor and as a classroom proctor for new or struggling teachers.

During the 2009 CRCT, the materials were stored in the conference room next to Principal Blackshear's office. Smith and Principal Blackshear had access to that room. Blackshear had 24 hour access to the building. She requested that everyone leave the school after administering the CRCT and that no one remain in the building after Blackshear left.

Dixon denied advising faculty to "do what they needed to do" to make targets.

E. Other Evidence

- In the 2006-2007, 2007-2008, and 2008-2009 school years, Woodson met AYP.
- In 2010, Woodson did not make AYP.
- Principal Viola Blackshear was on a PDP in 2008-2009 for not meeting APS targets.
- In some classes a correlation exists between students categorized by teachers on projection sheets as "not meets" and students with the highest erasures.
- A correlation exists between students who were "prompted" or assisted by a teacher on the CRCT and students identified by the erasure analysis as having the highest number of erasures.
- In some classes where teachers denied cheating, student data reveals that a large number of students' answers were changed from wrong to right at a 70-100% success rate.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

We conclude that Delores Pickett, Celesia Bough and Ashlyn Strozier cheated on the 2009 CRCT. While other teachers denied assisting their students, based upon the statistical improbability of even the lowest standard deviations in the flagged classes, we conclude that other teachers likely prompted students in their classes as well, but were not truthful during this investigation.

We also conclude that Testing Coordinator Dixon cheated by instructing teachers to seat students strategically so the students could copy one another's work during the CRCT.

Principal Blackshear failed in her ultimate responsibility for testing activities and for ensuring the ethical administration of and proper security for the 2009 CRCT. We conclude from the statistical data and other evidence secured in this investigation that Principal Viola Blackshear failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT and adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and she is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting, or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

VIOLA BLACKSHEAR

You have information concerning cheating at your school on the 2009 CRCT test, don't you?

You are refusing to provide these investigators with that information, aren't you?

You directed school employees to cheat on the 2009 CRCT, didn't you?

You coordinated cheating on the 2009 CRCT at your school, didn't you?

You facilitated the ability of school employees to cheat on the 2009 CRCT test, right?

You knew that school employees were cheating on the 2009 CRCT, didn't you?

You knew that teachers were providing student's with answers to the 2009 CRCT, didn't you?

You changed student's answers on the 2009 CRCT test, didn't you?

You did not report violations of testing protocol as you were required to do by Georgia law, did you?

In 2009, you were entrusted with ensuring that school employees act ethically?

Cheating is unethical isn't it?

You instructed your teachers to cheat on the 2009 CRCT didn't you?

You pressured your teachers to cheat on the 2009 CRCT didn't you?

You accepted bonus money from APS based on test scores you knew to be false?

Your school accepted federal money based in part on test scores you knew to be false?

By cheating on the CRCT you denied the State of Georgia an accurate assessment of your student's academic performance?

By cheating CRCT you denied the parents of your students an accurate assessment of their children's academic performance?

By cheating on the CRCT, you denied the children in your care an accurate assessment of their own academic performance.

SCOTT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

1752 Hollywood Road
Atlanta, Georgia 30318

Principal: Roxianne Smith
Testing Coordinator: Dr. Juanessa Booker

SRT-4 Executive Director: Tamara Cotman

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Scott Elementary in 2009. Forty-six people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Cheating at Scott is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms and by witness testimony. Principal Roxianne Smith failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

A. 2009 vs. 2010

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	68	1.4
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	51	1
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	19(17)	1(0)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	12.1	3.2
High Flagged Standard Deviation	20.2	3.2
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.4	3.2

B. Flagged Classrooms

Teacher	Grade & Test	Standard Deviation
BLACK	1 LA	4.826004496
NARCISSE	1 RD	3.474138687
SMITH	1 LA	7.690591885
SMITH	1 MA	6.070464107
DORSEY	2 LA	6.972660013
DORSEY	2 MA	15.4142974
GREEN	2 RD	8.746386998
GREEN	2 LA	6.164641216
GREEN	2 MA	5.017181495
HARRIS	2 RD	6.574296329
HARRIS	2 LA	11.59803391
HARRIS	2 MA	16.56563092
WORLDS	2 RD	11.3504833
WORLDS	2 LA	15.95132699
WORLDS	2 MA	13.68729712
GONGLEFSKI	3 RD	20.28051075
GONGLEFSKI	3 LA	6.422355453
GONGLEFSKI	3 MA	15.06647269
RUCKER	3 RD	19.43475948
RUCKER	3 LA	9.856691098
RUCKER	3 MA	16.49481446
QUACKENBUSH	3 RD	16.53018878
QUACKENBUSH	3 LA	9.627092713
QUACKENBUSH	3 MA	17.8510615
HINES	3 RD	15.39361764
HINES	3 LA	8.938297558
HINES	3 MA	13.29794642
MCNABB	4 RD	11.59287424
MCNABB	4 LA	12.79366698
MCNABB	4 MA	9.484797502
HARVEY	4 RD	15.01810238
HARVEY	4 LA	16.4742188
HARVEY	4 MA	16.918895
YOUNG	4 RD	15.922633
YOUNG	4 LA	13.05905558
YOUNG	4 MA	16.74915896
CARTER	4 RD	15.57551544
CARTER	4 LA	13.95805355
CARTER	4 MA	15.74959352
GRAVES	5 RD	14.69595248
GRAVES	5 LA	5.226172536
GRAVES	5 MA	14.9440121
LAMORTE	5 RD	7.244467584
LAMORTE	5 LA	5.178221109
LAMORTE	5 MA	5.100796052
JOHNSON	5 RD	16.12806351
JOHNSON	5 LA	8.327324423
JOHNSON	5 MA	14.08356504
SANTIAGUE	5 RD	17.03215583
SANTIAGUE	5 LA	13.29241273
SANTIAGUE	5 MA	14.41592043

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Overview

There are several facts which point to the conclusion that Scott Elementary School was not managed in a way to ensure that the 2009 CRCT results were accurately reported to the State Department of Education.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 68% for the 2009 CRCT. There were only nine schools in APS with a higher percentage in 2009.

Second, of the approximately 1,800 non-APS schools in the state taking the 2009 CRCT only one school had a higher percentage of flagged classrooms than Scott.

Third, with state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped from 68% to 1.4%.

Fourth, of the 51 flagged classrooms at Scott, 49 (96% of the total) had standard deviations that exceeded five, and 32 classrooms exceeded ten standard deviations. At five standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard deviations the probability is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations from the state mean were, for a number of classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at Scott.

Fifth is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures at Scott, 93% were produced by the flagged classrooms which account for only 68% of the total classrooms in the school.

Finally, test security was lax at Scott. People were allowed to come in and out of the testing coordinator's office while the CRCT materials were inside, and black paper covered the window in the door.

B. Narrative

Principal Smith and Dr. Juanessa Booker had access to the CRCT materials. The tests were stored overnight in a locked closet in Smith's office. Dr. Booker took the tests to her office during the day for distribution and collection. The tests remained in Dr. Booker's office throughout the day after testing ended. A teacher testified that the paraprofessional assigned to her classroom, Letrecia Walker, admitted to changing answers in Booker's office at Principal Smith's direction.

Booker's cousin, Antwan Joseph, was the math coach at Scott and was observed in Booker's office where the tests were accessible during testing week. Several witnesses reported that the window in Booker's door was covered with black paper during the 2009 CRCT.

APS received anonymous calls in February 2010 reporting cheating at Scott during 2009 and other years. One caller reported that tests were erased and changed in Dr. Booker's office in 2009 and that her window was covered with paper. Another caller reported that in 2008 and 2009, teachers covered their doors with paper during CRCT testing. In April 2010, APS hired attorney Penn Payne, to conduct an external investigation into the charges at the same time the Blue Ribbon Commission was investigating Scott and other schools flagged by GOSA. Payne interviewed eight people, including Booker and Principal Smith, who denied knowledge of cheating and denied that any windows were covered with paper. Payne's report, issued on May 25, 2010, concluded that the anonymous tips were unsubstantiated.

C. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Edwina Monique Browne (Special Education)

Monique Browne was a special education teacher at Scott in 2009. She stated that her paraprofessional, Letrecia Walker, admitted to changing answers on the 2009 CRCT for Principal Roxianne Smith. Principal Smith had a group of "favorites" who would do anything for her, including Letrecia Walker, Testing Coordinator Juanessa Booker, and math coach Antwan Joseph. Principal Smith had access to the tests because they were secured in her office closet, and Booker also had access to the tests because teachers picked them up and returned them to Booker's office. People came in and out of Booker's office during test week.

Browne stated she felt undue pressure by administrators to get students to score higher on the CRCT. She was surprised that her students scored so high on the test, and said that third grade teachers were also surprised by their students' performance.

Browne said the general discussion around school was that there was cheating and that it came from the "top down."

2. Cynthia Butler (Teacher)

Cynthia Butler testified that she saw black paper placed over the window in Booker's door. Math coach Antwan Joseph and Juanessa Booker are cousins. Joseph was in Booker's office many times during testing. Butler stated that any cheating would have been done by administrators because teachers had no time or opportunity to change answers.

3. April Graves (Teacher)

April Graves was a fifth grade teacher in 2009. She was flagged in all three subjects and stated that she did not witness her students making the amount of erasures indicated by the GOSA data.

4. Darin Johnson (Teacher)

Darin Johnson, a fifth grade teacher flagged in all subjects, stated students passed the CRCT who typically performed poorly throughout the year and on other tests. Students who missed school and did not turn in homework passed the CRCT. Johnson stated that one student considered "mediocre" had one of the highest wrong-to-right erasure counts.

5. Bonita Dorsey (Teacher)

Bonita Dorsey, a flagged second grade teacher, stated that she did not believe her students erased as much as the GSOA data indicates.

6. Stacey Carter (Teacher)

Stacey Carter heard of cheating at Scott. She denied cheating and did not know of anyone who cheated, but believed something must have happened to produce the data reported.

7. Lorrae Walker (Teacher)

Lorrae Walker was a teacher at Scott in 2009 who tested three students requiring special accommodations. Walker said it was inconceivable that they could have managed to change so many answers from wrong to right without intervention, as one student could not read and the others were not high functioning. Walker believes cheating occurred at Scott even though the cheaters did not manage to have Scott meet targets. Walker had no direct knowledge but believes administrators were most likely involved in the cheating.

8. Etoile Green (Teacher)

Etoile Green saw Antwan Joseph in Juanessa Booker's office where tests were kept. Green recalled being very surprised by her students' high scores.

9. Liza Williams (Teacher)

Liza Williams saw black paper over the window of Juanessa Booker's door during testing week. She stated that Booker, Principal Smith, Antwan Joseph, and Letrecia Walker were a close-knit group.

10. Erin Quackenbush (Teacher)

Erin Quackenbush had no direct evidence but believes the answers were changed by Booker because she had access to the tests.

11. Tonette Hunter (Teacher's Assistant)

Tonette Hunter was a teacher's assistant at Scott in 2007. Hunter served as a proctor during the 2007 CRCT. She stated that on the Thursday or Friday before the CRCT was to begin, Principal Roxianne Smith held a meeting with Ms. Hunter and other teacher's assistants and paraprofessionals. Smith told them that they needed to "do all they could to make sure the children pass" the CRCT. As she spoke, Principal Smith demonstrated her point by walking among the group, looking over their shoulders, and pointing down as if pointing out answers. After the meeting, Hunter said to Smith, "Well, this is not going to help the children." Principal Smith replied that Hunter would not be helping her salary if she did not cooperate. Smith also told Hunter, "You're overstepping your boundaries."

Hunter testified that she did not participate in prompting or assisting students during the test administration. After the CRCT concluded, Principal Smith asked Hunter how the testing went. Hunter told her, "I don't know, you're going to have to wait for your results."

A week after the CRCT, Hunter telephoned SRT Executive Director Tamara Cotman to report Principal Smith's directive to prompt students during testing, and other concerns she had about the school. The next day Cotman arrived at Scott and called Hunter into a meeting with Principal Smith. Cotman told Hunter that if she "did not keep her mouth shut" and kept causing problems at Scott, "you will be gone." Hunter then went to see Dr. Beverly Hall to discuss the cheating allegations and other concerns, but could not get an appointment. A woman from Dr. Hall's office met with Hunter in the lobby and listened to her, but took no notes during the

meeting. Hunter felt that she was being treated as if she were a “problem employee.” She heard nothing from the Superintendent’s office in response to her report. Hunter subsequently spoke to Atlanta School Board member LaChandra Butler Burks about the incidents at Scott Elementary, but Ms. Butler Burks did not respond as promised. In June 2010, during the Blue Ribbon Commission’s investigation, Hunter reported the 2007 CRCT cheating allegations to the APS hotline. A copy of Hunter’s hotline complaint is included as **Attachment A**.

Ms. Hunter was fired in May 2007, allegedly for attendance issues, although Hunter contends her termination was in retaliation for her complaints about cheating and other matters she reported about Scott Elementary.

D. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Roxianne Smith (Principal)

Roxianne Smith came to Scott as principal in 2006-2007. She deferred to Juanessa Booker’s experience as testing coordinator and took a hands-off role other than monitoring the halls. The tests were locked in Principal Smith’s office overnight, and Booker took them to her office daily for distribution. The tests remained in Booker’s office during the day “because that’s the way it was done” before Principal Smith came to Scott. She did not recall whether there was paper covering the window of Booker’s door, and was unsure whether it was permissible. Principal Smith claimed no knowledge of people gathering in Booker’s office with the tests and erasing answers. She also stated that if anyone said that Letrecia Walker changed answers at her direction, they were lying.

Principal Smith was interviewed by Penn Payne concerning testing irregularities at Scott in 2009. Payne did not inform her of the specific allegations and Smith did not inquire into the details of the accusation. When the report of Payne’s investigation was made public, Smith made no attempt to obtain a copy. She did not recall whether she spoke with Booker about Payne’s investigation and did not recall asking Booker whether she had been interviewed.

Scott Elementary School did not meet targets under Principal Smith’s leadership. She “did not know” if she felt pressure to meet targets or whether her job could be in jeopardy, although she was placed on a PDP twice, in part for failure to meet targets. She was evasive when asked if she had spoken with anyone about this investigation, and reluctant to name those to whom she had spoken.

Smith denied that she directed Juanessa Booker to change answers. She was not aware if teachers had the opportunity to change answers in the classrooms. When asked repeatedly if she believed students had made the erasures on their own, she only stated each time that they were the people “who had pencils and erasers” during the test.

2. Letrecia Walker (Paraprofessional)

Letrecia Walker was a paraprofessional for Monique Browne. She denied that she changed answers at Principal Smith’s direction and denied being in Juanessa Booker’s office with the tests. She heard that Booker’s door was covered with black paper.

Letrecia Walker stated that Principal Smith called teachers and paraprofessionals separately into her office after learning about the flagged classes. Smith questioned her about the testing and she felt that Smith was trying to intimidate her.

3. Dr. Juanessa Booker (Testing Coordinator)

Dr. Juanessa Booker was the Instructional Liaison Specialist and Testing Coordinator at Scott in 2009. She was aware of allegations she changed answers on the 2009 CRCT and denied erasing any answers. Students should have erased stray marks but if tests were turned in with stray marks, they could be erased by teachers. Booker denied there was paper covering her door and denied she was inside her office with test booklets. Booker claimed the tests were kept locked in Principal Smith's office. Both she and Principal Smith had the key.

Booker denied cheating or knowledge of cheating. She felt the CRCT scores accurately reflected the students' performance and was not surprised by the results.

4. Antwan Joseph (Math Facilitator)

Antwan Joseph was the math coach at Scott in 2009. Joseph denied cheating on the CRCT. During the 2009 CRCT, Joseph tested small groups of special education students and administered makeup tests. He and Testing Coordinator Juanessa Booker are first cousins and worked together previously at Towns Elementary. Joseph, Booker, and reading facilitator Cynthia Butler were considered part of Principal Smith's "administrative team." He and Butler assisted Booker with distributing and collecting the tests, which Joseph stated were kept in the lounge/parent center across the hall from Dr. Booker's office. Joseph thought that the custodian, Principal Smith and Dr. Booker had keys to the lounge. He did not recall the window being covered with paper and believed that the door to the lounge was usually open. Joseph stated that the tests were only in Booker's office when they were initially sorted and when they were packed up to go back to the Brewer Center. He did not believe that the tests were stored in the principal's office in 2009, but was not certain.

When asked why people would report that he and Booker were seen together in Booker's office during testing, Joseph first stated that it would not be unusual for people to see them together because the "administrative team" worked together closely. He did not know why anyone would state that he and Booker spent "extra" time together in her office during testing, because she was very busy. Later Joseph admitted that there were times when he was with Booker in her office with the tests. He did not elaborate. He denied that Booker's office window was covered with paper.

Joseph knew there were allegations about cheating at Scott, but did not know the details. He was surprised to learn during his interview that his cousin, Dr. Booker, had been investigated by Penn Payne concerning the cheating allegations. Although they were "very close," Booker had not informed him of the Payne investigation.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

We conclude that Testing Coordinator Juanessa Booker erased and changed student answer sheets with Antwan Joseph in her office after testing concluded. Principal Roxianne

Smith directed others to cheat. We believe teachers and proctors followed Principal Smith's directive to cheat, but do not have sufficient evidence to determine which teachers.

Principal Roxianne Smith failed in her responsibility for testing activities and for ensuring the ethical administration of, and proper security for, the 2009 CRCT. It is our conclusion from the statistical data and the other evidence secured in this investigation that Principal Smith failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT, and adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and she is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

Ethics and Compliance Reporting

General Information

Caller Name: TONETTE HUNTER		Client Name: Atlanta Education Fund	Report #: 114060574
Type: Former Employee		Location #: SCOTT ELEMENTARY	Priority:
Title: TEACHER ASSISTANT		DBA: ATLANTA EDUCATION FUND (C	Trans #: 1
Phone: (404)914-2811		Address: HOLLOWAY ROAD	Rpt Date: 06/23/2010
Best Time to Call: BETWEEN 8 AM AND 3 PM		City,State,Zip: ATLANTA - GA	Time: 01:15PM
		Country: USA	Origin: Phone Call
Email: tonichunter@hotmail.com		Phone:	

Summary Information

WHO: Caller, TONETTE HUNTER, reported ROXANNE SMITH and BEVERLY HALL.
WHAT: Cheating on Standardized Tests
WHEN: ONGOING SINCE 03/2007, EXACT DATE UNKNOWN
WHERE: AT THE LOCATION

Incident Description

6/23/2010 1:15:00 PM - Original Call

Caller, HUNTER, reported ongoing since 03/2007, exact date unknown, during testing time for the Criteria Reference Tests. Principal, Roxanne SMITH, advised all Teacher's Assistants to guide Students to the right answers when they were taking this test. HUNTER stated that when she worked at this location, Superintendent, Beverly HALL, ignored requests for help regarding this issue.

HUNTER would like for HALL and SMITH removed from their positions within the school system because HUNTER feels that HALL and SMITH are not qualified to oversee the education of children.

How does the caller know about the incident?: Witnessed

What documentation is available?: none

Involved Parties

Reported Individuals:

Name: BEVERLY HALL
Title: SUPERINTENDENT

Name: ROXANNE SMITH
Title: PRINCIPAL

Management Notified: NO

Involved/Aware Parties : NO

Supplemental Information

How does the caller know about hotline: Poster

Interviewer Observations:

Additional Information

Have you reported this incident to Atlanta Public Schools, the Atlanta Board of Education, Georgia Department of Education or other organization?

YES

Which organization did you report it to?

THE OFFICE OF BEVERLY HALL

Is the issue you're reporting related to a specific grade or class? NO

What is your relationship to the school or school system? (i.g., parent, teacher, concerned citizen, etc.) PREVIOUS EMPLOYEE

Client Instructions

The caller has provided his/her name and/or contact information indicating an interest in discussing this matter with a company representative

Conditions

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DEERWOOD ACADEMY

3070 Fairburn Road
Atlanta, Georgia 30331

Principal: Dr. Lisa Smith
Testing Coordinator: Lavonia Ferrell

SRT-1 Executive Director: Dr. Sharon Davis-Williams

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred at Deerwood Academy on the CRCT in 2009 and the summer of 2008. Thirty-seven people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. One person confessed to cheating on the CRCT in the spring of 2009 and the summer of 2008. Cheating at Deerwood is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms, confessions, and witness testimony. Principal Smith knew of cheating in 2009 and failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

A. 2009 vs. 2010

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	47.8	8.6
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	43	7
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	21(15)	6(1)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	6.5	3.8
High Flagged Standard Deviation	15.3	4.4
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3	3.4

B. Flagged Classrooms

Teacher	Grade & Test	Standard Deviation
HORNBUCKLE	1 LA	10.44227521
HORNBUCKLE	1 MA	11.35407784
LOWMAN	1 RD	4.144850139
LOWMAN	1 LA	4.295942077
LOWMAN	1 MA	6.847181265
MCDOWELL	1 RD	4.144850139
MCDOWELL	1 LA	6.425074404
MCDOWELL	1 MA	8.018708526
MONROE	1 LA	6.42562461
MONROE	1 MA	9.157537747
PEEK	1 RD	3.322749422
PEEK	1 LA	6.539778922
PEEK	1 MA	10.56596305
STEFFENS	1 MA	7.425305497
COKLEY	2 RD	7.907423342
COKLEY	2 LA	13.23261099
COKLEY	2 MA	15.25769515
FORD	2 RD	6.745223584
FORD	2 MA	5.508251047
HENREY	2 LA	6.428498378
HENREY	2 MA	3.555562147
HUFF	2 RD	4.186202842
HUFF	2 LA	3.02748816
HUFF	2 MA	4.131228906
WILLIAMS	2 LA	5.340175108
WILLIAMS	2 MA	3.670695498
BROWN	3 LA	5.64631291
BROWN	3 MA	3.356460954
JONES	3 RD	6.41558976
TRICHE	3 RD	3.653439181
MALLORY	4 RD	13.44280868
MALLORY	4 LA	4.020487133
MALLORY	4 MA	8.110691366
MCCULLEY	4 RD	3.067927107
WRIGHT	4 MA	4.754356328
DIGGS	5 LA	4.325432673
FRIEDLAND	5 RD	3.988983477
FRIEDLAND	5 MA	4.684581072
WARMACK	5 RD	6.530709212
WARMACK	5 LA	8.598697939
WARMACK	5 MA	5.589028002
WOODARD	5 RD	7.371264749
WOODARD	5 LA	9.676369378

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Overview

Several facts point to the conclusion that Deerwood Academy was not managed to ensure that CRCT results were accurately reported to the Georgia Department of Education.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 47.8% for the 2009 CRCT. With state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped from 47.8% to 8.6%.

Second, of the approximately 1,800 non-APS schools in the state taking the 2009 CRCT, only five schools had a higher percentage of flagged classrooms than Deerwood.

Fourth, of the 43 flagged classrooms at Deerwood, 26 (60% of the total) had standard deviations that exceeded five, and six classrooms exceeded ten standard deviations. At five standard deviations, the probability that this number of erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard deviations the probability is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations from the state mean were, for a number of classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at Deerwood.

Fifth is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures at Deerwood, 70% were produced by the flagged classrooms which account for 47.8% of the total classrooms in the school.

Last, teacher Margaret Merkerson says that she and Testing Coordinator Lavonia Ferrell changed student answer sheets during the summer 2008 CRCT retest, and the 2009 CRCT. Assistant Principal Tabeeeka Jordan knew of and approved this cheating in 2008 and 2009. Principal Lisa Smith knew of and approved this cheating in 2009.

B. Narrative

In July 2008, students from five schools came to Deerwood for the CRCT math retest. This was the first year that the summer CRCT scores would count towards AYP. Deerwood Assistant Principal Tabeeeka Jordan was in charge of testing and asked Lavonia Ferrell to be Testing Coordinator. Ferrell asked retired teacher Margaret Merkerson to assist with organizing the testing materials. Tabeeeka Jordan and Lavonia Ferrell orchestrated a scheme to ensure that the school made AYP. Jordan pulled several Deerwood students out of class and had Merkerson test them separately, although Merkerson had not been trained to administer the test. After testing was over, Ferrell asked Merkerson to assist her in erasing and changing test answer sheets of Deerwood students, using the answer keys Ferrell made. The window on the conference room door was covered with paper while Ferrell and Merkerson changed answer sheets in the conference room adjoining the principal's office. Assistant Principal Jordan came in and out of the room and witnessed their actions.

The results from the summer of 2008 CRCT retest showed improbable gains for Deerwood students. This resulted in a state investigation and an investigation done by APS.

For the 2009 CRCT at Deerwood, Jordan again asked Lavonia Ferrell to serve as testing coordinator. Merkerson had a temporary assignment at Deerwood and also assisted Ferrell. Merkerson and Ferrell erased and changed student answer sheets in the principal's conference room for several days, just as they did in 2008. Ferrell prepared answer keys for various versions of the tests. Ferrell sometimes selected answer sheets of students she knew were proficient in math to prepare those answer keys. Jordan came in and out of the room and witnessed the erasing. Principal Lisa Smith also came in and out from her adjoining office while erasing was in progress.

C. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Margaret Merkerson (Teacher)

Margaret Merkerson confessed to cheating on the 2008 and 2009 CRCT.

In 2008, Merkerson was a substitute teacher at Fickett Elementary. In July 2008, she was asked by Lavonia Ferrell to assist with the administration of the summer 2008 CRCT math retest to be given at Deerwood. Ferrell was the testing coordinator at Deerwood. Jordan supervised this testing. Working as an unpaid volunteer, Merkerson assisted Ferrell in organizing the tests in the conference room that adjoined the principal's office. Ferrell told Merkerson that Jordan wanted to ensure Deerwood made AYP. Merkerson and Ferrell sat at the conference room table and changed answers from wrong to right, using test keys that Ferrell made. Students from five different schools were tested. Merkerson thinks that they only changed answers of Deerwood students, but was not certain because Ferrell selected the answer sheets to be changed. A piece of paper covered the window on the door that led into the hall. Jordan came in and out of the conference room and saw the erasing. Jordan asked Merkerson to administer the test to Deerwood students she pulled out of class, although Merkerson had not received the required training. Merkerson recalled meeting Principal Smith in summer 2008 when Smith was at the school. Smith was not acting as the principal of Deerwood during the summer session.

In 2009, Merkerson worked at Deerwood as a long-term substitute. During the 2009 CRCT, she served as a proctor for Mr. Warmack's fifth grade class. She assisted Testing Coordinator Lavonia Ferrell in Principal Smith's conference room by erasing and changing answer sheets for three or four days, just as they had done the previous summer. Ferrell prepared answer keys and the window of the door leading into the hall was covered with paper. Ferrell sometimes complained that Merkerson erased "too slowly." The first group of answer sheets Merkerson changed were from Warmack's class. She does not think that she or Ferrell changed answers of first and second grade students.

Principal Smith and Jordan were aware of the cheating. Both came in and out of the conference room at various times while answers were being erased and changed. The test booklets and answer sheets were stacked on the table in plain view. Principal Smith would walk in from her office and ask how they were doing, as she grabbed a snack and returned to her office. Jordan would come in more often and sometimes stayed and talked awhile. Merkerson and Ferrell did not stop erasing when Jordan or Smith came in and did not try to hide the answer sheets, which were on the table.

Merkerson is remorseful for what she did in 2008 and 2009. She was shocked to learn after the April 2009 CRCT that an investigation was being launched concerning the results of the 2008 retest. When attorney Penn Payne began her investigation in June 2009, Merkerson received calls from Ferrell and Jordan, who tried to convince her that she had not actually administered the test to anyone in summer 2008.

We monitored several conversations between Margaret Merkerson and Lavonia Ferrell. During one discussion, Merkerson told Ferrell that she was thinking about telling the truth to the Governor's investigators about being in the room erasing answers with Ferrell. Lavonia Ferrell

told Merkerson that they had done nothing wrong and warned her not to tell what they had done, unless she wanted to be “locked up.” In other conversations, Ferrell stated that investigators had no evidence. Merkerson asked Ferrell if they should both just tell the truth to which Ferrell responded that if they did they might get in trouble for perjury.

2. Tabitha Martin (Reading Facilitator)

Tabitha Martin was certain there was cheating on the CRCT because she had access to students’ test scores and knew that some students who could not read were scoring at high levels. The students’ scores did not match their classroom performance. She recalled that Jordan was in charge of the summer 2008 CRCT testing, and afterward there were a lot of good grades and students had vastly improved test scores. She noticed that during testing in 2009, Jordan, Ferrell, and Merkerson would stay late. Martin heard some teachers used voice inflection when reading questions, and that hand signals were being used.

Tabitha Martin said the administration knew from the data how many students needed to pass the CRCT. Teachers would be told how many students they needed to exceed expectations and were asked how many they thought would pass. Teachers were asked how they were going to get the students to pass the test.

3. Kristy McDowell (Teacher)

Kristy McDowell had a student who could not read. The student passed the reading section of the CRCT. She knew other students who should have had lower test scores. McDowell denied any involvement in cheating.

4. Amy Lowman (Teacher)

Amy Lowman recounted discussions of cheating she heard. She heard that Kristy McDowell used voice inflection, Zanetta Hornbuckle gave answers, and Betty Jean Peak taught students to listen to her pauses for cues. Lowman heard that during the Summer 2008 retest, Tabeeka Jordan pulled some Deerwood students out to be tested separately. Lowman was shocked that her classes were flagged for high wrong-to-right erasures since her students scored so low.

5. Abigail Currens (Teacher)

Abigail Currens was an Early Intervention Program teacher in 2009 and taught math and reading to fifth graders. Currens heard several discussions of cheating on tests. Students taking the ITBS test told her that they had seen the test questions before in Rita Lawrence’s class.

6. Mary Mallory (Teacher)

Mary Mallory was a fourth grade teacher in 2009. She was surprised that one particular student who typically scored in the 600 range, made over 800 on the CRCT.

7. Betty Jean Peak

Betty Jean Peak was a fifth grade teacher at Deerwood in 2008. She stated there were students in her class who could not read. She identified specific students who did not pass the spring 2008 CRCT and had to attend summer school. Although Peak knew that those students did not have the ability to pass the summer 2008 CRCT, they were promoted to sixth grade and some passed the CRCT by 2 to 3 points. Peak denied cheating on the CRCT.

D. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Lisa Smith (Principal)

Lisa Smith stated that she saw no cheating at Deerwood and no one reported cheating to her. Principal Smith felt that she had been wrongly targeted for cheating during the Summer 2008 CRCT. She said she was not the principal in residence during the 2008 summer session. She felt she had been referred to the Professional Standards Commission as part of a witch hunt. Smith was temporarily removed as principal of Deerwood after the 2009 CRCT, but was reinstated in June 2010.

Dr. Smith admitted that paper covered the window in the door of her conference room in 2008 and 2009. The window was uncovered at the recommendation of the PSC.

Principal Smith was placed on a PDP in 2008 for low student achievement. She said she only told her administrative staff she was on a PDP. She admitted putting Jordan on a PDP in 2008 but claimed it was for behavioral issues.

With regard to the CRCT, Principal Smith said that she never touched CRCT materials and never went into the classrooms during testing. Smith did not feel pressure to meet targets but also did not like the feeling she and her staff experienced at the Convocation when the school's targets were not met. Deerwood did not make targets or AYP in 2008, but did make AYP in 2009 and 2010. Principal Smith denied ever directing anyone to cheat or change answers on the 2009 CRCT, and denied any knowledge or involvement in cheating. She did not understand how it would be possible for testing administrators to make answer keys or breach the security measures.

Smith was informed by SRT-1 Executive Director Sharon Davis-Williams in early 2009 that inquiries were being made into Deerwood's summer 2008 results. Testing protocols were to be tightened for the 2009 CRCT. Principal Smith requested that Ferrell return as the testing coordinator. She denied ever seeing anyone erasing and changing answers in her conference room. Anyone claiming they changed answers in the conference room was lying.

2. Lavonia Ferrell (Testing Coordinator)

Lavonia Ferrell was questioned about allegations of cheating and testing improprieties on the 2008 Summer Retest and 2009 CRCT. She had no information to provide. Ferrell was informed that investigators monitored telephone calls between her and others. Investigators played a portion of one recording to show her that calls had been recorded. Ferrell reiterated that she had no information to provide.

3. Tabeeka Jordan

Jordan was suspended from APS from August 2009 until June 2010, and since that time has been on medical leave pending hearings into allegations of cheating at Deerwood. Jordan denied any cheating or knowledge of cheating at Deerwood during the summer of 2008 and the spring of 2009. She denied knowledge of Lavonia Ferrell and Margaret Merkersen erasing and changing answers in the principal's conference room during either test administration. She did not know how they would have had the opportunity to cheat. Jordan claimed she did not go in and out of the conference room except when the tests were being distributed. She stated that if she had witnessed erasing she would have questioned what was happening. Jordan admitted that Merkersen tested a small group of Deerwood students, but maintained that Merkersen had been trained by Ferrell to administer testing.

Jordan admitted she was friends with Ferrell and Principal Smith, and had spoken with both of them concerning their interviews during this investigation. She did not believe that Ferrell participated in cheating and believed that Merkersen had "memory problems." Anyone who claimed that Jordan directed or facilitated cheating was lying.

E. Other Evidence

Teachers say they were pressured by Principal Smith to meet targets. Several were placed on a PDP for not meeting performance standards. It was important to Principal Smith to "make the floor" each year.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

We conclude that Lavonia Ferrell and Margaret Merkersen erased and changed student answer sheets during the 2008 summer retest CRCT and the spring 2009 CRCT. Tabeeka Jordan directed and witnessed the cheating in 2008 and 2009. Principal Lisa Smith witnessed the cheating in 2009.

It is our conclusion, from the statistical data and the other evidence secured in this investigation, that Principal Smith failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT, and adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and she is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

HUMPHRIES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

3029 Humphries Drive
Atlanta, Georgia 30354

Principal: Donald Clark
Testing Coordinator: Christi Davis-Langston

SRT-2 Executive Director: Michael Pitts

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Humphries Elementary in 2009 and in other years. Fifty people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Two people confessed to cheating. Cheating at Humphries is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms, confessions, witness testimony, and Principal Donald Clark's refusal to answer questions about cheating. Clark and Testing Coordinator Christi Davis-Langston knew or should have known of the cheating in 2009 and in other years. Principal Clark failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

A. 2009 vs. 2010

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	46.7	10.4
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	21	5
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	8(7)	3(1)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	9.0	5.4
High Flagged Standard Deviation	21.4	7.2
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.1	3.7

B. Flagged Classrooms

Teacher	Grade & Test	Standard Deviation
POWERS	1 RD	3.509111489
POWERS	1 LA	4.586102472
POWERS	1 MA	4.260461109
BUTLER	2 MA	5.190621156
SEALS	2 RD	4.228229406
SEALS	2 LA	3.880424229
MCNAMEE	3 RD	9.624865356
MCNAMEE	3 LA	6.422355453
MCNAMEE	3 MA	3.104472432
PASIVE	3 RD	7.025927454
PASIVE	3 LA	6.658610242
PASIVE	3 MA	4.300672458
ABELLA	4 RD	13.25179281
ABELLA	4 LA	21.43438688
ABELLA	4 MA	13.12665736
AHMED	4 RD	16.64351795
AHMED	4 LA	8.056040448
AHMED	4 MA	10.84091485
TERRY	4 RD	15.55531856
TERRY	4 LA	12.53867805
TERRY	4 MA	15.68865008

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Overview

There are several facts which point to the conclusion that Humphries Elementary School was not managed to ensure that the 2009 CRCT results were accurately reported to the Georgia Department of Education.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms was 46.7% for the 2009 CRCT. There were only 25 schools in APS with a higher percentage that year.

Second, of the approximately 1,800 non-APS schools in the state taking the 2009 CRCT, only eight schools had a higher percentage of flagged classrooms than Humphries Elementary School.

Third, with state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped significantly from 46.7% to 10.4%.

Fourth, of the 21 flagged classrooms at Humphries Elementary School, 14 (67% of the total) had standard deviations that exceeded five, and eight classrooms exceeded ten standard deviations. At five standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard deviations the probability is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations from the state mean were, for a number of classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at this school.

Fifth is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures at Humphries, 71.4% were produced by the flagged classrooms which account for only 46.7% of the total classrooms in the school.

Sixth, at least three proctors asked to be assigned other duties because they witnessed cheating by teachers on the ITBS test or the CRCT. Two teachers admitted to cheating on the 2009 CRCT.

Last, Principal Clark knew that cheating occurred on the 2009 CRCT, and attempted to cover up the misconduct. Lillian Lockhart told Clark she witnessed cheating. Mr. Clark told her, "If you don't tell me anything, I won't have to report anything."

B. Narrative

The fourth grade at Humphries was compartmentalized, meaning that one teacher taught science and social studies, one taught math, and one taught language arts and reading. The fourth grade teachers were instructed by Principal Clark to walk between each other's homerooms during the 2009 CRCT. While walking in each other's classrooms, Wendy Ahmed, Ingrid Abella, and Lisa Terry prompted students, and verbally gave answers or hand signals to indicate the correct answers. Two proctors, Demetrius Carroll and Adrienne Woods, witnessed

testing violations by Wendy Ahmed, Ingrid Abella, or Lisa Terry during testing in 2009 and asked to be removed as proctors. Lillian Lockhart also witnessed Wendy Ahmed giving hand signals to students during the administration of the 2009 CRCT and asked to be removed as a proctor. She was removed. No action was taken by the testing coordinator or Principal Clark to report this misconduct.

In 2010, Principal Clark informed the teachers at a meeting that GBI agents would be coming to the school to investigate allegations of cheating. Lillian Lockhart approached Principal Clark and told him what she saw in 2009, and told him she would tell the investigators what she saw. Principal Clark asked Lockhart why she was reporting this to him now, and stated “if you don’t tell me anything, I don’t have to report anything.” Lockhart told Principal Clark that she only witnessed hand signals, not erasing. The next day Principal Clark called Lockhart to his office and asked her if she wanted to talk about what she saw, but again cautioned her, “If you don’t tell me anything, I won’t have to report anything.” Confused and fearful, Lockhart told him she had nothing to report.

Lockhart later told Testing Coordinator Christi Davis-Langston what she witnessed in 2009, and that she had relayed the same to Principal Clark. Davis-Langston went to Principal Clark and relayed what Lockhart told her. Principal Clark separately instructed Lockhart and Davis-Langston not to discuss the matter with anyone. Lockhart ignored this instruction and discussed the matter further with Davis-Langston, and both went to Principal Clark’s office. Principal Clark became angry and berated them for refusing to follow his instruction of silence.

Later, Principal Clark told Lockhart that he would have to file an OIR report on the incident. Clark instructed Lockhart to prepare a statement about what she witnessed in 2009. She prepared a statement but left out the majority of the details, because she believed that is what Principal Clark wanted her to do.

APS sent Penn Payne to investigate the matter. Lockhart testified that Ms. Payne’s questions seemed designed to make her feel as she were betraying her friends and her school. Lockhart admitted she minimized the cheating she witnessed to Payne.

C. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Joanne Carroll (Proctor)

Joanne Carroll witnessed Maria Pasive prompt students during the administration of the 2009 ITBS test, and requested to be removed as her proctor for the 2009 CRCT. We attempted to interview Maria Pasive on multiple occasions, but did not locate her.

2. Adrienne Woods (Proctor)

Adrienne Woods witnessed “irregularities” on the 2008 CRCT, and requested to be assigned to a different classroom for the 2009 CRCT. In 2009 many of the fourth grade students could only read on a second grade level, but exceeded expectations on the CRCT.

3. Tonia Clark (Proctor)

Tonia Clark admitted to prompting students during the 2009 CRCT. She witnessed Lisa Terry instructing students to change answers during the 2009 CRCT. She also saw Wendy Ahmed verbally giving students the answers on the test.

4. Lillian Lockhart (Proctor)

Lillian Lockhart witnessed Wendy Ahmed giving students answers to the 2009 CRCT by giving hand signals while standing in front of the classroom. After witnessing Wendy Ahmed cheating, Lockhart requested a new assignment for the remainder of the 2009 CRCT from Testing Coordinator Christi Davis-Langston. Lockhart did not provide a reason for this request, nor did she report the cheating she witnessed.

Later, in 2010, Principal Clark informed Humphries' teachers that investigators would be coming to the school with regard to cheating on the 2009 CRCT. Lockhart went to Clark and disclosed the cheating she witnessed, and told Principal Clark she would tell the investigators what she saw. Clark asked Lockhart why she failed to report the incident in 2009, and said, "If you don't tell me anything, I won't have to report anything." Lockhart told Principal Clark that she only witnessed Wendy Ahmed making hand gestures and not any erasing. The next day Clark again called Lockhart to his office and told her, "If you don't tell me anything, I won't have to report anything." Lockhart told Principal Clark that she had nothing to report.

Clark instructed Lockhart not to speak with anyone about the incident but she spoke with Davis-Langston, who in turn spoke with Clark. He called them both to his office and berated them for talking to one another when he instructed them not to. He then told Lockhart that he would have to report the incident to OIR, and instructed her to write a statement about what she witnessed. Lockhart wrote a statement and intentionally left out most of the details because she believed Principal Clark wanted her to leave out many details.

APS sent attorney Penn Payne to question Lockhart. Lockhart said that Penn Payne's questions were designed to make her feel as if she were betraying her friends and her school. She minimized the cheating she saw in response to the pressure she felt from Penn Payne.

During the 2010 CRCT, Lockhart was assigned to monitor a kindergarten class and was not allowed to proctor the CRCT. Lockhart believes she was placed in a kindergarten class in retaliation for reporting the testing violation in 2009.

5. Demetrius Carroll (Proctor)

Demetrius Carroll heard that Lisa Terry, Wendy Ahmed, and Ingrid Abella cheated on the CRCT. During the 2008 CRCT, Carroll witnessed a student copy from another student's answer sheet in Abella's classroom. He reported the violation to Abella. She did not seem surprised and moved the student's desk a few inches away from the other student. Carroll asked for a different proctoring assignment because of this incident and because he heard that Abella prompted students on the CRCT. He reported the violation to then-testing coordinator Yolanda Faison.

6. Tia Brown (Proctor)

Tia Brown saw Ingrid Abella approach many students' desks during the administration of the 2009 CRCT, but she could not tell what Ingrid Abella was doing.

7. Cawanna Powers (Teacher)

Cawanna Powers heard that the third, fourth, and fifth grades erased and changed students' answers on the 2009 CRCT.

D. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Donald Clark (Principal)

Donald Clark denied any knowledge of cheating, and does not believe anyone cheated at Humphries.

2. Christi Davis-Langston (Testing Coordinator)

Christi Davis-Langston testified that Lillian Lockhart did not report the cheating described in Section IV(C)(4) until March of 2010. She immediately reported this to Principal Clark, and prepared the statement included as **Attachment A**.

Davis-Langston said she was surprised at how well the students of Wendy Ahmed, Lisa Terry, and Ingrid Abbella performed on the 2009 CRCT.

3. Wendy Ahmed (Teacher)

Wendy Ahmed denied making hand signals or otherwise prompting students on the 2009 CRCT. Principal Clark instructed her to write a statement detailing what she did and what testing protocols she violated. She drafted a statement and turned it in to Principal Clark. She heard nothing further until Penn Payne's investigation.

4. Ingrid Abella (Teacher)

Ingrid Abella denied prompting students on the 2009 CRCT and denied that Demetrius Carroll ever pointed out a student cheating in her classroom. She also denied moving that student's desk a few inches away.

5. Lisa Terry (Teacher)

Lisa Terry admitted to cheating by prompting students during the administration of the 2009 CRCT.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

After observing cheating, multiple proctors asked that they be removed from fourth grade classrooms during the CRCT and the ITBS test. Based on this evidence, we conclude that Christi Davis-Langston knew, or should have known, cheating occurred on the 2009 CRCT at this school.

We conclude that Wendy Ahmed, Ingrid Abella, Lisa Terry, and Tonia Clark cheated on the 2009 CRCT.

Based on the statistical evidence and evidence we have found at schools with similar statistical data, we believe that other flagged teachers cheated. However, we lack sufficient evidence to determine who engaged in this misconduct.

Lillian Lockhart reported to Principal Clark that she witnessed Wendy Ahmed cheating on the 2009 CRCT. Instead of immediately reporting this, Clark attempted to dissuade Lockhart from telling the truth by saying, "If you don't tell me anything, I won't have to report anything." Principal Clark knew of cheating in 2010, if not before. He attempted to prevent Lockhart from reporting Wendy Ahmed's cheating on the 2009 CRCT.

We further conclude that Principal Donald Clark failed in his ultimate responsibility for testing activities and for ensuring the ethical administration of, and proper securing for the 2009 CRCT. It is our conclusion, from the statistical data and other evidence, that Principal Clark failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT, and adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and he is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

Statement of Events

I, Christi Davis-Langston, the 2008-2009 testing coordinator for Humphries Elementary School, was approached on the fourth day of the CRCT administration around 2:00p.m by Mrs. Lillian Lockhart, one of the testing proctors. Mrs. Lockhart approached me with a concern saying she felt a little uncomfortable with proctoring in the classroom to which she was assigned. I immediately informed her that if an irregularity occurred, I needed to know so it could be reported to Mr. Clark and the testing office. She paused for a moment and said, "No, just assign me another duty; I can handle it."

At that point, I thought it had something to do with some sort of tension between the two teachers. My main concern was the importance of maintaining a nurturing environment for the students. Therefore, without hesitation I immediately assigned her to a new duty for the remaining days of the CRCT administration. I thought her concern was resolved after being placed as hall monitor. This concern was not brought to my attention again until March 25, 2010.

Mr. Clark called a faculty meeting March 24, 2010, and informed us that the State would be coming to our school to investigate the testing procedure at our school. He told us how proud he was of his staff and that we had not done anything wrong, so we had nothing to be concerned about.

On March 25, 2010, Mrs. Lockhart came to my office and told me that she went to Mr. Clark immediately after the faculty meeting about the concern that she had last year while proctoring in Mrs. Abella's 4th grade classroom. I asked her why did she not report this irregularity to Mr. Clark and me on last year. She said she thought she could handle it, but her conscious kept bothering her.

While in my office, Mrs. Lockhart began telling me what she told Mr. Clark. She stated that she told Mr. Clark that Mrs. Ahmed, a 4th grade science and social studies teacher, came into the classroom where Mrs. Lockhart was proctoring to look in on her students to provide a little motivation while her students were taking that portion of the test. She stated that she told Mr. Clark that Mrs. Ahmed started giving answers out in front of the class. She said she told him that she pulled her aside and told her that she could not do that. Mrs. Lockhart went on to say that she told him that she and Mrs. Ahmed had a conversation about Mrs. Ahmed's actions, and she felt a little better. During the course of her telling me what she told Mr. Clark, she said Mr. Clark asked her if she saw Mrs. Ahmed erase any answers and she said, "No."

On Friday morning, March 26, 2010, Mr. Clark called me into his office to share a concern that Mrs. Lockhart had regarding proctoring in Mrs. Abella's class during CRCT testing 2008-2009. Mr. Clark informed me that Mrs. Lockhart stated an irregularity was committed by Mrs. Ahmed during the 2008-2009 testing session. At that point I informed him that Mrs. Lockhart only voiced a concern about feeling uncomfortable while proctoring the CRCT and requested that she be moved. I granted her request because, as I stated above, I thought there might be some tension between them, and I wanted to preserve the testing environment for our students.

10-0110-25-11

EXHIBIT _____

GLOSSARY

TERM	DEFINITION
APS	Atlanta Public Schools. An independent school system in the City of Atlanta, Fulton County, Georgia. Officially the “Atlanta Independent School System.”
AYP	Adequate Yearly Progress. Part of the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, AYP is a measure of year-to-year student achievement on statewide assessments. Schools, school districts, and states must demonstrate a certain level of performance on reading and/or language arts and mathematics assessments. Schools that do not “meet AYP” for two consecutive years in the same subject area are designated as schools in “Needs Improvement.”
Certified educator	Individuals trained in education who hold teaching, leadership, service, technical specialist, or permit certification issued by the PSC.
Classroom level data	CRCT erasure analysis data for specific teacher or homeroom, including the subject tested, number of students, total number of wrong to right erasures, and resulting standard deviation.
Confessed	Admitted to the truth of a charge or accusation.
Convocation	Annual celebration held by APS to recognize schools that have met at least 70 percent of its performance targets. All APS schools’ faculty are expected to attend.
CRCT	Criterion-Referenced Competency Test. A standardized test used by Georgia as the AYP assessment tool for elementary and middle schools. Tests grades 1-8 in reading, English/language arts, and math. In addition, grades 3-8 are tested in science and social studies.
ELA	English /language arts
Fifth (5 th) Amendment	The privilege against self-incrimination grounded in the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, providing that no person will be compelled to be a witness against himself. In a criminal case, if a defendant invokes the 5 th Amendment and refuses to testify, he may not be presumed guilty based on that refusal. However, in a civil case, if a witness invokes the 5 th Amendment and refuses to answer questions concerning whether he or she committed a particular act, “it creates an implied admission that a truthful answer would tend to prove that the witness had committed the act.” <i>Perez v. Atlanta Check Cashers, Inc.</i> , 302 Ga. App. 864, 870 (2010).
GOSA	Governor’s Office of Student Achievement. State agency which provides accountability for Georgia’s schools, pre-K through postsecondary levels. The intent is to improve student achievement and school completion in Georgia.
GTR ID#	Unique identification number assigned to each student.

IEP	Individualized Education Program. Free, appropriate, public special education services which students with certain disabilities or impairments are eligible to receive. An IEP is a written plan developed by a team of teachers, other qualified personnel, parents, guardians, and the student if appropriate.
Implicated	Shown to be also involved, usually in an incriminating manner.
LA	Language arts
MA	Mathematics
Makes the floor	At Convocation, schools that “make the floor” have met at least 70 percent of its targets. Those schools’ faculty members are seated in groups on the floor of the host venue, with the schools meeting the highest percentage of its targets seated closest to the stage. Schools that do not make the floor are seated in bleachers or other remote seating.
Meets, exceeds	Refers to a measurement, usually expressed as a percentage, of students who “met” or “exceeded” state standards in certain core curriculum subjects (math, reading, English/language arts, science, and social studies) as measured by the CRCT.
Monitors	Persons assigned to a school to observe test administration procedures; e.g. test distribution, test collection, storage of test materials. Observes testing sites to see that schedules are being followed, reports unusual activity.
OIR	APS Office of Internal Resolution/Employee Relations. Processes and investigates complaints and reports of employee wrongdoing and related employment matters.
Parapro/paraprofessional	A person who may have less than professional-level certification, who relates in role and function to a professional and does a portion of the professional’s job under the professional’s supervision, and whose decision-making authority is limited and regulated by the professional. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-204. Georgia paraprofessionals must be certified by the PSC.
PDP	Professional Development Plan. A plan developed and implemented to correct perceived deficiencies in performance of teachers and administrators, used to encourage and support improvement in specific areas.
PEC	Program for Exceptional Children. Program offering specialized, educational testing, evaluation and other services to eligible children with certain disabilities or impairments. Each eligible student must have an IEP.
Preponderance of the evidence	A standard of proof in civil cases. Evidence which is of greater weight or more convincing than the evidence which is offered in opposition to it; that is, evidence which as a whole shows that the fact sought to be proved is more probable than not.
Proctors	Persons assigned to monitor classrooms or other specific areas during testing; circulate to observe students and discourage misconduct; assist test examiner to maintain testing security; report unusual activity or irregularities.

Prompting	Assisting students during testing by use of verbal or nonverbal cues. Examples include voice inflection, pointing to answers, repetition or rephrasing of words or passages, physical cues, movements, sounds, or signals meant to suggest or convey the answer or encourage students to erase and change an answer.
PSC	Georgia Professional Standards Commission. A state agency created “to set and apply high standards for the preparation, certification, and continued licensing of Georgia public educators.” The PSC also handles the investigation and due process of cases referred for disciplinary action.
RD	Reading
RPA	APS’ Department of R esearch, P lanning and A ccountability. Among other functions, RPA manages and oversees all testing programs at APS.
Social promotion	The practice of promoting a student from one grade level to the next on the basis of age rather than academic achievement.
SRTs	S chool R eform T eams. APS is organized into four (4) geographically aligned areas comprised of elementary and middle schools, each headed by an executive director. The structure is meant to provide greater accountability and faster service to schools and parents.
Standard deviation	A measure of the variability or dispersion of a distribution of scores that represents the average difference between individual scores and the mean. The more the scores cluster around the mean, the smaller the standard deviation.
Student level data	CRCT erasure analysis data for each individual student for each subject tested (RD, ELA, MA) showing the total number of erasures made on that test, and the number of those erasures that changed from wrong to right.
Stray marks	Pencil markings made on answer sheets that are visible outside of the “bubble” or oval area where answer choices are to be marked.
Targets	An accountability program implemented by APS, consisting of specific performance goals set for each school at the beginning of the school year. The targets are based on quantifiable measures, primarily CRCT test scores, and also include factors such as student attendance, and enrollment in rigorous academic courses.
Testing accommodation	A change in a test administration that modifies how a student takes or responds to the assessment. Accommodations are designed to provide equity and serve to level the playing field for students with disabilities and English Language Learners.
Totality of the evidence	Finding or conclusion based on all of the circumstances of a particular case, rather than any one factor.
WTR	W rong T o R ight = an incorrect answer choice is erased and changed to a correct answer choice on an answer sheet, as detected by erasure analysis using high speed optical scanners.

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DUNBAR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

403 Richardson Street SW
Atlanta, Georgia 30312

Principal: Betty Greene
Testing Coordinator: Lera Middlebrooks

SRT-2 Executive Director: Michael Pitts

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Dunbar Elementary in 2009 and in other years. Thirty-three teachers at this school were interviewed, some more than once. One teacher confessed to cheating and described a schoolwide effort to systematically change students' answers. Cheating at Dunbar is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms, a confession and witness testimony. Teachers altered student tests at the direction of the testing coordinator. In 2009, Principal Betty Greene knew, or should have known, about the cheating and did nothing to stop it. She failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

A. 2009 vs. 2010

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	68.8	22.2
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	35	8
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	12(12)	4(3)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	10.6	4.3
High Flagged Standard Deviation	25.5	5.7
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	5.7	3.1

B. Flagged Classrooms

Teacher	Grade & Test	Standard Deviation
CLEVELAND	1 RD	17.22939083
CLEVELAND	1 LA	16.99132645
CLEVELAND	1 MA	11.47314625
ROBINSON	1 RD	13.47719177
ROBINSON	1 LA	11.79453268
ROBINSON	1 MA	11.81766289
BUCKNER WEBB	2 RD	9.956665175
BUCKNER WEBB	2 LA	13.44381668
BUCKNER WEBB	2 MA	10.72902389
NEAL	2 RD	13.38424431
NEAL	2 LA	12.94238772
NEAL	2 MA	12.63677355
FINCH	3 RD	12.74161831
FINCH	3 LA	13.07106849
FINCH	3 MA	8.163582603
SIMS	3 RD	13.6532191
SIMS	3 LA	15.51816483
SIMS	3 MA	14.46837268
MERO	4 RD	15.29138298
MERO	4 LA	16.71096832
MERO	4 MA	13.65208524
JACKSON	4 RD	8.644315347
JACKSON	4 LA	15.37803113
JACKSON	4 MA	9.828594528
MORRIS	4 RD	8.305788944
MORRIS	4 LA	5.692897979
MORRIS	4 MA	16.63570708
BROWN	5 RD	19.00286597
BROWN	5 LA	19.20845225
BROWN	5 MA	19.24820175
MERO	5 RD	25.48075585
MERO	5 MA	17.29375013
IVEY	5 RD	24.52850503
IVEY	5 LA	19.77430582
IVEY	5 MA	23.00447453

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Overview

There are several facts which point to the conclusion that educators at Dunbar cheated on the 2009 CRCT.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 68.8% for the 2009 CRCT. There were only eight schools in APS with a higher percentage that year.

Second, of the approximately 1,800 non-APS schools in the state taking the 2009 CRCT, only one school had a higher percentage of flagged classrooms than Dunbar.

Third, with state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped from 68.8% to 22.2%.

Fourth, of the 35 flagged classrooms at Dunbar, all (100%) had standard deviations that exceeded five and 29 (83% of the total number of flagged classrooms) classrooms exceeded ten

standard deviations. At five standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard deviations the probability is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations from the state mean were, for a number of classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at Dunbar.

Fifth is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures 98.6% were produced by the flagged classrooms which accounted for only 68.6% of the total classrooms.

Additionally, several witnesses state that teachers at Dunbar changed answers on the 2009 CRCT and probably in previous years as well.

B. Narrative

Testing Coordinator Lera Middlebrooks called teachers to the computer lab to “clean up” the tests. They were called by grade level. One teacher confessed to changing answers in the computer lab with other teachers of her grade level. Given the high standard deviations in all grades at Dunbar, we find it likely that third, fourth, and fifth grade teachers altered test documents as well. Lera Middlebrooks attempted to influence witnesses by threatening them with harm if they told investigators about the erasing.

At least one teacher, Gloria Ivey, gave students the correct answers during the test.

C. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Rose Neal (Teacher)

Rose Neal taught second grade and confessed to cheating on the 2009 CRCT. Lera Middlebrooks approached Neal in 2009 and told her that she could “clean up” the tests if she wanted. Neal believed Middlebrooks meant that she could erase and change answers. Neal erased her students’ answers in the computer lab with fellow first and second grade teachers Pamela Cleveland, Shani Robinson, and Diane Webb Buckner. They all changed answers for approximately thirty minutes. Middlebrooks did not change answers but she was in the room.

All grade levels received the same opportunity to cheat. Neal heard that three teachers declined to cheat: Martina Jackson, Shawntye Finch, and Kimberly Brown Yontz. She believes the others changed answers.

Cleveland, Ivey, Neal, and Middlebrooks discussed that if they did not say anything this investigation could not find anything. They agreed to tell the same story. Middlebrooks threatened the teachers that if they told investigators what happened she would place a lien on their house or “get them at their car.” She said, “If any bitch mentions my name . . .,” implying that she would do something violent to anyone who implicated her.

According to Neal, cheating occurred during the tenure of the prior principal Corliss Davenport as well. Davenport had a team of teachers that would change answers in a back office.

2. Jonathan Baggett (Teacher)

Jonathan Baggett started teaching at Dunbar in the 2009-2010 school year. Baggett soon heard “What happens at Dunbar stays at Dunbar . . . You wouldn’t believe what goes on here.” Baggett was a monitor during the 2010 CRCT. During the math portion each student in Ivey’s fifth grade class had a sheet of paper on their desk. Baggett and another hall monitor say they believe there were math formulas on the paper.

During the social studies portion of the CRCT, Baggett saw suspicious activity. Immediately prior to the administration of the test, the students had their social studies books out. When Baggett walked into the classroom, he says he felt that the students knew they were doing something wrong and looked guilty and uncomfortable. Baggett reported this activity to the SRT monitor. The SRT monitor told him to tell Principal Greene. Principal Greene told Baggett that since the children had their books out prior to the test, there was nothing improper.

During the 2010 ITBS, Baggett heard Ivey giving her students the answers to the test questions.

3. Lashaine Blake (Teacher)

Lashaine Blake taught at Dunbar in 2004 and 2005. She witnessed former principal Corliss Davenport point to the correct answers on the CRCT for students.

4. Larita Dixon (Teacher)

In the 2004-2005 school year, Dixon tutored students. On one occasion, she asked the students how they scored so well on the CRCT because she knew they had not studied the material. Corliss Davenport filed an OIR complaint against Dixon for confronting students. Davenport wrote the report in such a way that it did not reference test scores. Dixon believes Ivey was the one who gave her tutorial students the answers to the CRCT.

Parents requested that their children be placed in Ivey’s class because she would give students the answers to the CRCT. Dixon believes that Ivey wrote the answers on the board.

5. Shawntye Finch (Teacher)

Teachers got together by grade level and erased stray marks and “cleaned up” tests with the test books open. Five to six people were in the room at a time “cleaning up” the tests. Teachers at all grade levels participated.

Students request to be tested by teacher Gloria Ivey. Finch thinks this is because Ivey gives the students the answers.

6. Martina Jackson (Teacher)

Students request to be tested by Gloria Ivey. The students say that if Ivey tested them she would help them on the CRCT.

7. Oreta Taylor (Proctor)

Oreta Taylor proctored during the 2009 CRCT. She told Lera Middlebrooks she did not want to proctor Ivey's class in 2009 because she suspected Ivey gave students the answers.

In some year prior to 2009 she heard former principal Corliss Davenport and Middlebrooks say to each other, "What are we going to do about these test scores?" She thought this was suspicious.

Alan Gotlieb, a Teach for America teacher, told Taylor his students' answer sheets had been altered and that he took pictures of the answer sheets. Gotlieb was at Dunbar when the prior principal was there.

No teacher would report cheating because the procedures require the teachers to talk to the testing coordinator who then reports to the principal. Teachers would not report misconduct to the people who were cheating. Also, teachers were told they would be fired if they did not improve test scores but would receive bonuses if test scores improved. Taylor feels that the environment was ripe for cheating. She does not believe APS planned the cheating but that there was a "culture of carelessness," and that there was pressure combined "with looking the other way."

D. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Betty Greene (Principal)

Principal Greene testified that she did not cheat and does not have knowledge of cheating. When asked to explain the statistical evidence, she stated that the classes at Dunbar are very small and so it does not take much erasing for the standard deviations to be high.

Principal Greene testified under oath that she did not know that Middlebrooks directed teachers to "clean up tests" or erase stray marks.

2. Gloria Ivey (Teacher)

Gloria Ivey denied knowledge of cheating. In 2009, Ivey had three subjects flagged with standard deviations of 19, 23, and 24. Ivey's test results dropped in 2010, and when investigators asked her to explain why the scores dropped, she blamed it on the children. Ivey said her students in 2010 were not as bright as her students in 2009.

3. Lera Middlebrooks (Testing Coordinator)

Lera Middlebrooks was interviewed four times and denied any knowledge of cheating.

4. Corliss Davenport (former principal)

Corliss Davenport denied cheating while she was the principal of Dunbar. Three particular teachers had CRCT score gains that made her suspicious, but she has no direct knowledge of cheating.

Davenport was the principal of Dunbar from 2003 to 2007. Test scores steadily improved while she was principal, but not at a level satisfactory to SRT-2 Director Michael Pitts. Pitts asked Davenport sign a guaranty in 2006 stating that all of her Dunbar students would pass the CRCT. She refused to sign the document and Pitts began sending harassing and threatening e-mails regarding her dedication to the job. Davenport discussed the issue with Dr. Kathy Augustine. Augustine told Davenport that Davenport and Pitts needed to work together and understand each other better. It was after this that Pitts opened an investigation into a personal bank account used by Davenport to deposit monies obtained from renting out the school. This was a common practice within APS. Davenport opened a personal account because Pitts never responded to her e-mails asking where she should put the money. Davenport accounted for all proceeds that entered and exited the account and cooperated with the investigation. The APS investigation stated that she did not break the law but used poor judgment and she should be terminated. The termination was rescinded after Davenport's attorney spoke with APS. Davenport was tired of fighting with Pitts and resigned on April 1, 2007.

E. Testimony of Additional Witnesses

I. Dunbar Student

A student at Dunbar told investigators about an altercation among the students over the scores received by Ivey's students. Students in Brown's fifth grade class were upset because the students in Ivey's class received awards for their CRCT scores. After an awards ceremony there was a fight in the hallway between the two classes over the awards. The children in Brown's class did not believe the students in Ivey's class were "smart enough" to win the awards.

F. Other Evidence

In June 2009, the Georgia Department of Education ("DOE") passed along an allegation of cheating to APS. The allegation came to the DOE from the Toombs County Public School System. According to the complaint, in March of 2009, Lera Middlebrooks gave a friend and former colleague, Wanetta Jones, who was working in Toombs County, two Grade 5 prompts for the 2009 Georgia Writing Assessment. Jones e-mailed educators in Toombs County. Jones' e-mail stated: "A friend gave me these suggested topics for this year's writing assessment." The topics were two of the three topics that appeared on the writing assessment administered in March. Jones told investigators that she spoke to Middlebrooks about test topics on February 24 and February 28. She sent the e-mail to Toombs County teachers on March 1. The APS-hired outside investigator determined that Dunbar received the writing test on February 26. Middlebrooks' defense was that the two topics she suggested are topics she used during training throughout the school year and that she told Jones the topics before the tests arrived at Dunbar. Middlebrooks said she only talked to Jones on February 24 and that they did not talk on February 28. According to Middlebrooks, she could not have known the topics before the tests arrived at Dunbar. The APS investigation concluded that the evidence did not support a finding that Middlebrooks shared test topics with Jones.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

We find that Testing Coordinator Lera Middlebrooks directed and facilitated cheating on the 2009 CRCT. Our conclusion is based on the statistical evidence, the testimony of Rose Neal, and the Dunbar teachers who say tests were “cleaned up” in Middlebrooks’ presence.

Rose Neal testified that the first and second grade teachers changed answers together. She implicated the following first and second grade teachers: Pamela Cleveland, Shani Robinson, and Diane Webb Buckner. Each of those teachers is flagged and we conclude that they altered students’ answer sheets.

Teachers in all five grades at Dunbar are flagged. Witnesses testified that teachers “cleaned up” tests by grade level in the computer lab with Lera Middlebrooks. Neal confirmed what many teachers suspected: that “cleaning up” meant erasing answers. Based on the statistical evidence in third and fourth grades, we believe that other flagged teachers cheated in the same manner. However, we lack sufficient evidence to determine which additional teachers engaged in cheating.

There are three flagged teachers in the fifth grade with standard deviations that range from 17.3 to 25.5. It is highly improbable that these wrong-to-right erasures occurred without human intervention. One of the fifth grade teachers is Gloria Ivey. A student, Oreta Taylor, Martina Jackson, Shawntye Finch, Neal and Jonathan Baggett all testified that Gloria Ivey cheated on the CRCT and on the ITBS test. We conclude that Gloria Ivey cheated on the CRCT in 2009 and in other years. We believe that other flagged fifth grade teachers cheated in the same manner. However, we lack sufficient evidence to determine which additional teachers cheated.

It is likely that Principal Greene knew teachers were cheating. The computer lab was on the same hallway as Principal Greene’s office and Neal stated that Principal Greene was in her office when the teachers were erasing answers. The evidence further indicates that prior principal Corliss Davenport cheated, or had knowledge of, cheating on the CRCT in the years prior to 2009.

We further conclude that Principal Betty Greene failed in her ultimate responsibility for testing activities and for ensuring the ethical administration of, and proper securing for the 2009 CRCT. It is our conclusion, from the statistical data and the other evidence secured in this investigation, that Principal Greene failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT, and adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and she is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

In summary, we conclude that Rose Neal, Pamela Cleveland, Shani Robinson, Diane Webb Buckner, Lera Middlebrooks, Gloria Ivey, Corliss Davenport and Betty Greene were involved in, or knew about, cheating on the CRCT.

D.H. STANTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

970 Martin Street
Atlanta, Georgia 30315

Principal: Willie Davenport
Testing Coordinator: Francis Mack

SRT-2 Executive Director: Michael Pitts

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at D.H. Stanton Elementary in 2009. Forty-three people were interviewed at D.H. Stanton, some more than once. Cheating at this school is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms and witness testimony. Principal Willie Davenport falsified attendance records and failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

A. 2009 vs. 2010

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	58.3	17.6
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	28	9
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	13(10)	5(3)
Mcan WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	7.1	4.5
High Flagged Standard Deviation	16.4	6.8
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.2	3.3

B. Flagged Classrooms

Teachers	Grade & Test	Standard Deviation
FREEMAN, S	1 LA	3.156218027
FREEMAN, S	1 MA	5.993240792
HENDERSON	1 LA	3.919355265
HENDERSON	1 MA	6.982042641
PEARSON	1 LA	4.742821759
PEARSON	1 MA	6.721165913
BEAN	2 LA	6.097889682
BEAN	2 MA	4.412189693
LONGLEY	2 LA	4.457594802
RAILEY	2 RD	3.323602389
RAILEY	2 LA	5.034765376
RAILEY	2 MA	13.35227113
CROWDER	3 RD	9.079333524
FREEMAN, J	3 RD	10.59476171
FREEMAN, J	3 LA	4.001932283
FREEMAN, J	3 MA	3.51359273
MARTIN	3 RD	13.15889705
DRIGER	4 RD	5.654729531
DRIGER	4 LA	4.549254822
DRIGER	4 MA	4.596643495
HALL	4 RD	16.41395851
HALL	4 LA	13.83837352
HALL	4 MA	9.647934367
COWAN	5 LA	5.273507313
COWAN	5 MA	5.402169957
TURMAN	5 RD	7.739448899
TURMAN	5 LA	8.890014444
TURMAN	5 MA	8.224118733

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Overview

Several facts point to the conclusion that D.H. Stanton Elementary School was not managed to ensure that the 2009 CRCT results were accurately reported to the Georgia Department of Education.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 58.3% for the 2009 CRCT. With state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped from 58.3% to 17.6%.

Second, of the 28 flagged classrooms at D.H. Stanton, 18 (64% of the total) had standard deviations that exceeded five, and five classrooms exceeded ten standard deviations. At five standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard deviations the probability is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations from the state mean were, for a number of classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at D.H. Stanton.

Third, is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures at D.H. Stanton, 87% were produced by the flagged classrooms which account for only 58.3% of the total classrooms in the school.

Fourth, of the 1,800 non-APS schools in the state taking the 2009 CRCT, only two schools had a higher percentage of flagged classrooms.

Fifth, there was a culture of cheating at D.H. Stanton. Chari Cowan testified that she was instructed to cheat on the CRCT writing test. Many teachers spoke of conversations of cheating at D.H. Stanton. If teachers heard these conversations, Principal Davenport probably did also, yet she did nothing.

Last, test security was poor at D.H. Stanton. Testing Coordinator Francis Mack admitted to leaving CRCT materials unattended in her unlocked office. Moreover, an eyewitness saw the CRCT answer sheets spread across Mack's desk when she was out of the building.

B. Narrative

The attendance clerk, Carmen Smith, entered Francis Mack's office at Principal Davenport's direction when Mack was absent and discovered tests and answer sheets spread out on the desk and table. The clerk reported the discovery to Principal Davenport and was told to retrieve the tests. By the time Smith returned to Mack's office to retrieve the test materials, she found that the tests had been gathered up. Smith suspected that Davenport directed another teacher, Valerie Hall, to remove the tests and answer sheets from Mack's office.

Carmen Smith confessed to altering attendance logs at the direction of Principal Davenport, who threatened her with termination if she did not comply.

Principal Davenport created an atmosphere ripe for cheating by applying pressure on teachers to improve test scores. Teachers were told exactly how many students in their class had

to pass the CRCT. Some teachers prompted students during testing, and some gave students the answers.

C. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Carmen Smith (Attendance Clerk)

Carmen Smith testified that Principal Davenport gave her the key to Francis Mack's office and asked Smith to locate a form. Mack was absent from school that day. Carmen Smith opened Francis Mack's office and saw test booklets and answer sheets spread out on Mack's desk and on an adjacent table. Smith left immediately, reported her discovery to Principal Davenport, and asked if she should retrieve the tests from Mack's office. Davenport told her to retrieve the tests but did not appear concerned. Smith was stopped by someone in the hall on the way to Mack's office. By the time she arrived at Mack's office, she found the desk and table cleaned off and the test materials were gone. Carmen Smith suspected that Principal Davenport sent someone to waylay her in the hallway and ordered Valerie Hall to collect the tests from Mack's office. She believed it was Valerie Hall who retrieved the tests because Hall had a key to Mack's office. Smith believed that Mack and Hall erased and changed answers with Principal Davenport's knowledge. Smith stated that Mack "ran" the school.

Principal Davenport ordered her to change attendance logs in 2009 to mark certain students "present" who were absent. Smith complied with Davenport's orders because she was threatened with termination.

Teachers at D.H. Stanton, including Erica Turman, Valerie Hall, and Pamela Kirkland Pearson prompted students with answers, changed students' answers, and gave answers to students. Principal Davenport and Francis Mack pressured teachers about test scores and making targets.

Principal Davenport was training Francis Mack to become principal at D.H. Stanton after Davenport retired. Davenport and Mack were close and believed Davenport wanted Mack to become principal to enable cheating to continue. She filed an OIR complaint against Davenport, Mack, and SRT-2 Executive Director Michael Pitts to try to prevent Mack from becoming a principal.

2. LaVerne Nash (Proctor)

LaVerne Nash was a proctor in 2009. During the 2009 CRCT testing week, Nash saw test booklets on Francis Mack's desk. Mack's office was open, but she was not in her office. Nash thought that was odd because the test booklets were to be secured at all times.

Although she lacked proof, Nash believed that Principal Davenport may have instructed Mack to change test answers because Davenport was always trying to "make the floor." She believed that Mack changed the tests with the help of Valerie Hall and Erica Turman because they always stayed late after school during testing.

3. *Chari Cowan (Teacher)*

Chari Cowan was a fifth grade teacher in 2009. She recalled that in 2009, Francis Mack called Cowan to her office and directed her to look at a document on her desk. Cowan recognized the document as the “prompt” for the upcoming Fifth Grade Writing Test. She refused to review the document further or to use the information on the document. Cowan felt she was being “set up” by Mack because when she had previously questioned Mack and Principal Davenport about how students were able to progress to the fifth grade or pass the CRCT without being able to read, she was met with verbal abuse from them.

Cowan stated that at least half of her 2009 class of 16 boys could barely read but somehow passed the summer CRCT and went on to sixth grade. When she asked them how they had passed in previous grades, they told her that teachers Valerie Hall and Cassandra Driger had given them the answers.

Pamela Kirkland Pearson told Cowan in 2009 that she overheard Francis Mack, Erica Turman and Valerie Hall discussing how they were going to change the test scores. Pearson stated that Tracy Jones-Salifu also overheard that conversation.

4. *Tracy Jones-Salifu (Math Coach)*

Principal Davenport told Tracy Jones-Salifu that she would not have a job if the school did not meet targets. Davenport said “what am I going to tell Mr. Pitts if you don’t meet targets?” Davenport was threatening and abusive to everyone except Francis Mack. It was important to teachers and administrators that D.H. Stanton “make the floor” at Convocation. Jones-Salifu heard that third and fifth grade teachers gave answers to students and changed wrong answers in 2009.

Jones-Salifu said that Pamela Kirkland Pearson used to be friends with Principal Davenport, Francis Mack and Valerie Hall until Pearson “decided not to cheat anymore.” Jones-Salifu stated that Pearson came to her in tears reporting that Valerie Hall and Francis Mack told Pearson that she needed to “buy into the plan” of how to cheat on the 2010 CRCT. Pearson was ostracized when she refused to cheat.

Chari Cowan said that Francis Mack left the prompts for the Fifth Grade Writing Test on the desk in her office for Cowan to use, but Cowan refused to take the information.

Jones-Salifu believed there was cheating in 2009-2010 by Mack and others accessing the tests during the CRCT make-up test. Jones-Salifu said that Valerie Hall had a key to Mack’s office. Jones-Salifu stated that cheating may have occurred in 2009-2010 because Mack arranged the schedule to allow friends to test each others’ class. She stated that Erica Turman tested Valerie Hall’s class, and Michelle Martin tested Turman’s class.

5. *Remika Smith (Reading Coach & Co-Testing Coordinator)*

Remika Smith was the reading coach and the “co-test coordinator” with Francis Mack in 2009. Mack suggested cheating. Mack’s friends participated in the cheating, including Valerie Hall, Erica Turman, Cassandra Driger, and Pamela Kirkland Pearson. There had been a falling out between Mack and Pearson. Pearson was reported to use voice inflection to prompt students.

Principal Davenport pressured the teachers to meet targets and told them that certain numbers of students must pass.

D. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Willie Davenport (Principal)

Willie Davenport stated that she never touched a test and was not aware that Francis Mack did anything to the tests. She denied being told about tests and answer sheets spread out in Mack's office. Davenport thought that Carmen Smith would have motivation to lie about her. She thought that Carmen Smith had a rivalry with Francis Mack.

Principal Davenport thought that targets were realistic and stated that no one had ever complained to her that they could not be achieved. She denied any allegations of cheating. She did not understand how anyone could claim she was involved in cheating.

2. Francis Mack (Testing Coordinator)

We interviewed Francis Mack twice. She was represented by counsel. She became Testing Coordinator for the 2009 CRCT, only one year after coming to D.H. Stanton. In her first interview, Mack denied that she erased and changed answers on the CRCT. Mack was aware of allegations that tests and answer sheets were seen in her office. She claimed that if there were tests in her office it was because she had to fill in student identification information on the forms. She usually performed this task in the media center, but claimed she decided to do it in her office in 2009 because the media center was unavailable. Mack would never leave answer sheets unattended in her office, and stated that if the answer sheets were in her office then she was in the building. Then she admitted that she may have left early one day during test week. When asked why someone would report seeing answer sheets spread out in her office, Mack stated that Carmen Smith had lied about her in the past.

Mack stated that only she, Principal Davenport, and the custodian had keys to Mack's office. It was important to Principal Davenport to "make the floor" and she told teachers to do everything they could to help students pass the test as long as it was ethical. Mack denied she was under pressure from Davenport to increase test scores. When asked whether she knew of anyone cheating at D.H. Stanton, Mack voiced suspicions that first grade teachers may have prompted students during the test. She believed the students were responsible for the high erasures. She stated she would not benefit from changing answers because she was only the test coordinator.

When Mack was interviewed a second time, she stated that Carmen Smith sometimes went into her office in her absence and "probably" had a key; that Smith "distributed the keys," and had keys to "everything in the building." She claimed that Smith had a master key to the building, locked the building at night and left around 6:30 p.m. Mack usually left school around 4:00 p.m. Valerie Hall and Mack became friends in 2009 and anyone who said Hall had a key to Mack's office was lying.

She stated for the first time that her "co-test coordinator," Remika Smith, would have been in her office when she was filling in student ID information on test forms, unless Smith was in a meeting elsewhere. She could not recall whether Remika Smith was attending a meeting in

2009 when test sheets were in her office. Mack recalled filling in the student ID information on the answer sheets with Remika Smith in the media center, not in her office. She claimed she never had answer sheets in her office, but admitted she may have carried a few to her office when she needed to look up information on her computer. Mack stated that she and Principal Davenport are not friends but only have a working relationship. She disputed that Principal Davenport had been grooming her to be the next principal of D.H. Stanton.

Carmen Smith filed a false OIR report against her after she confronted Smith about reports from teachers that Smith was altering attendance records. Smith told her she was doing it under orders but would not tell her who instructed her to change the records. Carmen Smith was incompetent. She thought Carmen Smith was out to get her. She insisted that she would not cheat for Principal Davenport. She reiterated that she had no motive to change answers. When asked who had motive to change answers, she said if anyone changed answers it could be Carmen Smith, Remika Smith, and Tracy Jones-Salifu. She felt that people were trying to undermine her. Ultimately, she thought that the children were responsible for the erasures.

3. Valerie Hall (Teacher)

Valerie Hall denied changing answers, prompting students, providing answers, or doing anything wrong. She was aware that people thought she had a key to Mack's office, and that she and Mack changed answers. She admitted to being friends with Mack, but denied having a key and changing answers.

Hall was flagged in all subjects. She stated that her students erased due to the testing strategies she taught them. When she was confronted with data about her students' erasures, she agreed that the numbers looked odd but had no explanation for the erasures other than her testing strategies. Hall was aware that people thought she cheated during the 2010 CRCT as well, which she found surprising.

4. Pamela Kirkland Pearson (Teacher)

Pamela Kirkland Pearson was a first grade teacher in 2009, and was flagged in language arts and math. She denied changing answers, prompting students or giving answers to students. Pearson received threatening phone calls from Davenport and Mack in the summer of 2010 in which they cursed her and accused her of telling people that she had seen them with the tests.

Principal Davenport pressured teachers to improve their students' scores and wanted "100%" from all first grade teachers. Davenport told each teacher how many students she wanted to pass the test. Regarding our investigation, Principal Davenport and Francis Mack told her to "be careful what you say. Your license is on the line."

Pearson believed there was cheating on the 2010 CRCT, and that it was accomplished in part by teachers administering the test to their friends' classes.

5. Erica Turman (Teacher)

Erica Turman taught fifth grade in 2009. Turman did not believe Mack would change answers. She claimed she would never erase answers at Mack's request and questioned why people claimed they were friends.

Turman was flagged in all subjects. She did not recall her students erasing as much as the data indicated but denied she had cheated. Some students claimed that Turman gave them answers to the test in 2010, but Turman denied the allegations.

She said in APS, pressure came “from the top.” She stated that if you can’t “produce scores” you might be moved from a critical grade to another one.

Turman was interviewed by Stan Williams from the Office of Internal Resolution (OIR) about cheating complaints after we instructed APS to stop further investigations into the CRCT allegations. Turman stated that OIR was convinced she had cheated and that Williams interviewed her for three to four hours and shouted at her.

6. Cassandra Driger (Teacher)

Cassandra Driger taught fourth grade in 2009. She was flagged in all subjects, but denied cheating. She had no explanation for the erasures in her class. She stated that there was a lot of pressure to have students pass the CRCT. Targets were considered a “big deal” because there was money associated with meeting them. Driger was transferred from fourth grade to second grade in August 2010, due to low test scores.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

Principal Davenport directed Carmen Smith to falsify attendance records.

We also conclude that Principal Davenport pressured teachers to meet targets and raise test scores. She created an environment for cheating by exerting pressure on teachers to ensure that specific numbers of students passed the test. When a witness discovered tests and answer sheets spread out in Mack’s office, Davenport attempted to prevent the witness from retrieving the materials. We conclude that Principal Willie Davenport directed and facilitated cheating on the CRCT and Testing Coordinator Francis Mack orchestrated a scheme to erase and change student answer sheets. Some teachers provided answers to students in 2009 and other years.

We conclude that Principal Willie Davenport failed in her ultimate responsibility for testing activities and for ensuring the ethical administration of, and proper security for, the 2009 CRCT. It is our conclusion from the statistical data and the other evidence secured in this investigation that Principal Davenport failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT, and adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and she is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

FINCH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

1114 Avon Avenue
Atlanta, Georgia 30310

Principal: Dr. Linda Paden
Testing Coordinator: Sheila Maxwell

SRT-1 Executive Director: Dr. Sharon Davis-Williams

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Finch Elementary in 2009. Twenty-five people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Three teachers confessed to cheating. Cheating at Finch is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms, confessions, and witness testimony. Principal Linda Paden failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

A. 2009 vs. 2010

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	48	10.3
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	36	8
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	14(12)	5(2)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	6.4	4.3
High Flagged Standard Deviation	12.5	6.9
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3	3.3

B. Flagged Classrooms

Teacher	Grade & Test	Standard Deviation
FLORENCE	1 RD	8.846474026
FLORENCE	1 LA	10.19554239
FLORENCE	1 MA	5.910475918
WILLIAMS	1 RD	4.998094435
WILLIAMS	1 LA	7.957153707
WILLIAMS	1 MA	5.462605321
COLLIER	2 RD	4.646391888
COLLIER	2 LA	7.56492777
COLLIER	2 MA	11.29655878
DANIEL	2 RD	3.675444286
DANIEL	2 LA	3.822209124
DANIEL	2 MA	5.179953847
MAY	2 RD	3.162734205
MAY	2 MA	4.706895666
SHORTER	2 RD	8.856146833
SHORTER	2 LA	4.839756297
SHORTER	2 MA	6.943705203
THOMAS WILSON	2 RD	8.450655498
THOMAS WILSON	2 LA	4.932053882
THOMAS WILSON	2 MA	11.26949673
GATES	3 RD	6.534536821
JACKSON	3 RD	7.877656967
JACKSON	3 LA	5.137420301
SIMS	3 RD	4.136286631
SIMS	3 LA	3.011752305
SIMS	3 MA	4.721896378
FULLER	4 RD	7.710450651
FULLER	4 LA	4.546424278
FULLER	4 MA	4.27940952
RICHARDS	4 RD	3.5223442
RICHARDS	4 LA	4.121365048
RICHARDS	4 MA	4.807330648
WOODS	4 RD	6.822352397
SCOTT	5 RD	12.47303933
SCOTT	5 LA	8.177833943
SCOTT	5 MA	8.846474026

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Overview

There are several facts which point to the conclusion that Finch Elementary School was not managed to ensure that the 2009 CRCT results were accurately reported.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 48% for the 2009 CRCT. With state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped significantly, from 48% to 10.3%.

Second, of the 36 flagged classrooms at Finch, 20 (55% of the total) had standard deviations that exceeded five, and four classrooms exceeded ten standard deviations. At five standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard deviations the probability is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations from the state mean were, for a number of classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at Finch.

Third is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures at Finch, 73% were produced by the flagged classrooms which account for only 48% of the total classrooms in the school.

Finally, Principal Paden expected her teachers to cheat. She allowed teachers to take their CRCT materials to their classrooms after the testing period. Three teachers confessed to cheating. Principal Paden knew of and directed cheating on the 2009 CRCT at Finch Elementary School.

B. Narrative

Three teachers confessed to cheating. Two teachers pointed to answers, re-read questions, or used other cues to ensure their students chose correct answers. One teacher confessed to erasing and changing answers in the principal's conference room where teachers were gathered by grade levels to erase stray marks. The testing coordinator, Sheila Maxwell, supervised the room where stray marks were erased but claimed to be too busy to notice what teachers were actually erasing.

Principal Linda Paden was on a PDP and told teachers if she was on a PDP, they would also be on a PDP. Teachers who cheated did so out of fear of negative evaluations or job loss if they failed to improve test scores. Principal Paden told them, "Walmart's hiring." The pressure exerted by Principal Paden on her staff to meet targets, raise test scores, and "push the children" created an environment conducive to cheating.

C. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Ashley Daniel (Teacher)

Ashley Daniel confessed to cheating in 2009. She was flagged for high wrong-to-right erasures in all subjects. Teachers were called to the principal's conference room by grade level for the purpose of erasing stray marks. All second grade teachers were present. In her first interview she stated that she erased stray marks and darkened in circles if they were light. If two answers were marked and she could tell which one was darker, she would erase the lighter colored answer. After Daniel was informed that the evidence indicated she was responsible for changing answers she initially admitted responsibility for the erasures, but then stated she "really did not change" answers. Daniel repeatedly confessed and recanted.

At her second interview, Daniel admitted she changed answers during the time that stray marks were being erased in the conference room. She believed that other teachers also changed answers. The second grade teachers, and first grade teachers Joya Florence, Richanda Williams, and Curtis Collier were present.

Daniel said that there were several reasons teachers would cheat. Principal Paden linked test scores to evaluations, and told Daniel that she needed better scores to get a better evaluation. Scores were posted at faculty meetings and teachers were singled out in front of their colleagues. Principal Paden threatened teachers in a meeting, and told them if she was going to be on a PDP, then they should be on one also. Principal Paden made threatening statements, like "The door swings both ways," and "Walmart is hiring."

2. *Danielle Jackson (Teacher)*

Danielle Jackson confessed to cheating on the CRCT by prompting her students to change answers from wrong to right. She gave extra attention to students having difficulty during the test. For example, she pointed to questions and nodded her head if an answer was wrong, and sometimes reiterated a learning point such as “you know I taught you about pronouns...” If a student finished a section too quickly, she instructed the student to look at the questions again, and sometimes encouraged them to erase the answers if she noticed they were wrong. She believed her actions resulted in students changing answers from wrong to right.

Jackson recalled that when she turned in her tests at the end of the day she was asked by either Maxwell or Paden, on more than one occasion, if she needed her tests back after lunch. She did not understand why she would need her tests back after lunch and said no. She later learned that first and second grade teachers were allowed to test under a different schedule that permitted testing before and after lunch. Jackson taught third grade. She heard that first and second grade teachers spent a long time in the conference room “erasing stray marks,” and stated that it became a joke around the school.

She was surprised that two or three students who did not read well passed the CRCT.

There was great pressure on teachers to have their students get high test scores. Principal Paden publicized teachers’ scores in faculty meetings and if a teacher did not do well they would be told to seek the advice of a teacher with higher scores, a practice which teachers found humiliating. Principal Paden told Jackson on the first day of testing that SRT-1 Executive Director Sharon Davis-Williams was watching Jackson and knew that her test scores were low.

3. *Richanda Williams (Teacher)*

Richanda Williams confessed to prompting her students to erase and change answers. She read the question twice to her students, walked by their desks, and if she saw several students marking the wrong answer she read the question a third time. She stated that if her “smarter students” were marking wrong answers, then she knew the others were missing the answer as well. Williams claimed that she did not use voice inflection, but raised her voice and told the class to “stay focused.”

Williams stated that she and other teachers were called by grade level to erase stray marks, but denied changing any answers. Williams admitted that if the answer was not completely bubbled in they would fill in the rest. She understood that to be “standard procedure,” but did not know where she got that understanding. If an answer was not sufficiently erased, she would erase it more completely. Williams estimated she was in the room about 30 minutes. Principal Paden came in and out of the conference room while tests were being “cleaned.”

Williams stated that there was a lot of pressure at staff meetings to meet targets. Principal Paden stressed that they had to “move the children” along.

4. Sharona Thomas-Wilson (Teacher)

Sharona Thomas-Wilson denied cheating and had no explanation for the high number of wrong-to-right erasures in her class. She stated that during the 2009 CRCT, her class finished early on the first day so she tried to turn in her tests. Principal Paden offered to let her take the tests back to her class and give the students more time. Thomas-Wilson declined and turned in her test materials. Teachers Melissa May and Curtis Collier also finished early and were present during the exchange. Principal Paden threatened to write them up for creating a testing irregularity by finishing the test early. Testing Coordinator Sheila Maxwell communicated the same message later. On the second day, Principal Paden instructed Thomas-Wilson to test her students from 9:00-10:30 a.m. only on section one of the test, then stop for lunch and turn in the tests. The schedule change allowed the students an extra 30 minutes to complete section one. After lunch the students were to start section two of the test and work until they were finished. Thomas-Wilson had to follow the altered schedule for days two and three of testing.

The teachers cleaned stray marks in the conference room after testing. Thomas-Wilson recalled being in the room “about an hour” and stated that other second grade teachers were in the room, including Curtis Collier. She believed the only reason Collier might have denied being in the room was because it might be viewed as an opportunity to erase answers. Principal Paden and Maxwell were present when the teachers entered the room, but Principal Paden left shortly thereafter. Maxwell entered and exited the room periodically, leaving the teachers alone with the tests.

Thomas-Wilson testified that when she started at Finch she inflated students’ grades to C’s because Principal Paden made it known that she did not want students to receive D’s or F’s. Later she was told by Paden that she needed to change the C’s to even higher grades because a C implied that Finch was average. Thomas-Wilson felt she could not make the grade higher because she had already given C’s to some students who deserved D’s or F’s.

In 2009, a student told Thomas-Wilson that a teacher who is no longer at Finch provided answers during a previous CRCT. Thomas-Wilson had questioned the student about his decline in performance between first and second grade, which she found strange because the material was basically the same. The student said his previous teacher gave the student answers and told classmates to “look on each others tests.” Thomas-Wilson said that she had a number of students in the past who could not read but passed the CRCT.

5. Veatris Wright (Teacher)

Veatris Wright was a third grade teacher in 2009. Wright now teaches second grade because she was demoted for having low test scores on the 2009 CRCT. She said that she felt a lot of pressure but she did not cheat. When the 2009 CRCT scores came back, Principal Paden called Wright to her office and told her that her scores were the worst on her grade level. Wright explained that she had a tough class that year and had a problem with some of the girls being bullies. Principal Paden told her that SRT-1 Executive Director Davis-Williams “didn’t want to hear any of that.” She was told that her scores were not low enough to be placed on a PDP, but if the scale should change Wright would be notified. She and other teachers were threatened on more than one occasion with a PDP for low test scores. Principal Paden said she knew that

Wright was being considered for tenure and that her scores had better be good. One week into the summer, Principal Paden called Wright and told her she was being moved back a grade. Wright knew it was due to low test scores. Another teacher was also moved back a grade for low scores.

Wright stated that teachers were called to the conference room at the end of testing to erase stray marks. She did not cheat or observe anyone else cheating. She was asked on more than one occasion by Principal Paden and Testing Coordinator Sheila Maxwell if she needed her tests back after lunch. Wright heard that answers were being changed, but had no specific information.

Veatris Wright stated that every year she had one or two students coming into her class who could not read but who had exceeded standards on the prior year's CRCT.

D. Testimony of Additional Witnesses

1. Curtis Collier (Teacher)

Curtis Collier attempted to turn in his test materials early but was told to take them back to his class because it was "too early." He did not re-distribute the tests to the students, he just returned the tests later. Collier denied entering the room when stray marks were being erased.

2. Melissa May (Teacher)

Melissa May denied cheating on the CRCT. She stated that during the 2009 CRCT she, Thomas-Wilson and Collier, attempted to turn in their test materials and were told it was "too early" and they should take the tests back to their classrooms. May went back to her room and placed the materials on a table. She recalled that teachers erased stray marks in the conference room and that Collier, Thomas-Wilson, Tyrone Shorter and Ashley Daniel were present. May stayed "about ten minutes" and Collier finished before her and left.

Principal Paden told May that teachers would be put on a PDP if their test scores were low.

3. Joya Florence (Teacher)

Joya Florence stated that teachers were called to the conference room by grade level to erase stray marks. She became distressed when we informed her that there seemed to be a correlation between schools where groups get together to erase stray marks and schools where systematic cheating occurred. However, she denied changing answers or seeing others change answers. When Florence was told in a follow-up interview that the evidence suggested she had changed answers on her students' tests, she became emotional. She stated that she had been dealing with a difficult student all day and wanted to go home.

4. Demiris Gates (Teacher)

Demiris Gates denied cheating or having knowledge of cheating. Teachers were called to the conference room by grade level to erase stray marks. APS created an environment regarding

test scores in which teachers “must make it happen.” Students must pass the test and scores must keep rising. He knew that Principal Paden was on a PDP for low test scores. Gates was surprised one of his students passed the CRCT.

5. Tyrone Shorter (Teacher)

Tyrone Shorter recalled that Collier and May tried to turn in their tests early but were not allowed to do so by Sheila Maxwell. Shorter stated that at the end of testing the teachers were called by grade level to erase stray marks. He acknowledged that he was in the room when stray marks were erased but denied making any erasures, even when told that others contradicted this statement. Shorter stated that Maxwell asked him, when he was leaving the room, if he had “checked the test.” He told her yes, but she repeated the question two more times. Shorter believed that she was trying to convince him to change answers. Principal Paden and Maxwell did not get along because Principal Paden wanted things done a certain way, and Maxwell tried to “uphold proper testing procedures.”

Shorter did not get along with Principal Paden because after he asked questions in faculty meetings, she transferred him from fourth to second grade for “challenging her authority.” When contacted for a follow-up interview, Shorter stated he was concerned about the consequences of being truthful, and was concerned that his answers might jeopardize his teaching certificate. Shorter told us he wanted to consult his attorney before speaking again to us. When Shorter appeared with counsel at a subsequent interview, he stated that he had already answered questions and refused to answer any more.

6. Walda Jefferson (Math Coach)

Walda Jefferson was the math coach in 2009. When shown the list of flagged teachers, she stated she was not surprised at many of the names on the list. She thought the test scores were high and that some students were passing the math portion when they clearly did not grasp the fundamentals and scored low on pretests. It was obvious someone cheated because the test scores did not reflect the ability of the students. She had students transfer in from Gideons, Peyton Forest, Venetian Hills and other schools who exceeded standards on the math portion of the CRCT but could not perform single-digit addition.

7. Lincoln Woods (Teacher)

Lincoln Woods denied any knowledge of cheating and stated that he did not go to the conference room to erase stray marks. He stated he did not feel pressure for his students to do well on the CRCT.

8. Charlotte Scott (Teacher)

Charlotte Scott denied cheating. Scott had no explanation for her wrong-to-right erasures.

E. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Sheila Maxwell (Testing Coordinator)

Sheila Maxwell was the Testing Coordinator at Finch in 2009. She never witnessed cheating in classrooms and did not know when it could possibly occur. People would not cheat around her because they knew that she would report it. She did not recall asking teachers if they needed more time or if Principal Paden asked teachers either. She did not know why anyone would make that statement and speculated that teachers may have been confused.

Maxwell said she was a “stickler” for protocol and procedure. Erasing stray marks was a common procedure and mandated by the state. It was her job to supervise that procedure. She called teachers down to the principal’s conference room by grade level after the testing was completed. The tests were stacked on the table and labeled with the appropriate teacher’s name. Teachers were directed to their stack, given a pencil, and told to “clean the tests.” She said that the third, fourth and fifth grade teachers only had the answer sheets when erasing; the test booklets were in a separate stack.

Maxwell admitted it was possible for a teacher to see that two answers were bubbled in and erase the lighter one if it appeared that it had not been completely erased. She said it was important to make sure that stray marks were erased completely so that they could not be picked up by the machine that grades the tests. After stressing the importance of that procedure, Maxwell claimed that she never checked the tests to make sure that stray marks were actually erased. She insisted that teachers were simply asked to clean the tests; whether they actually did so was up to them. She stated that she did not have time to sit and watch the teachers while they erased, because she was too busy packing tests and filling out paperwork at the side of the room. Her focus, she said, was to ensure that all the test materials were prepared and packed. She would glance over and see that teachers had pencils and were erasing. Principal Paden was “in and out of the room” while stray marks were being erased.

Maxwell could not recall how long teachers were in the room, but thought they spent only eight to 12 minutes erasing stray marks. She denied that any teacher spent an hour erasing stray marks. She did not recall any teacher refusing to report to the room to erase stray marks. She recalled that all teachers reported to the conference room.

Maxwell and Principal Paden had professional difficulties. She filed a complaint with OIR against Principal Paden, alleging that Paden had pressured her to sign a form attesting that the CRCT materials were stored in the vault, which Maxwell stated was not true. Paden was known to lie. Maxwell felt that she was ostracized for standing up to Principal Paden and filing a complaint. She was put on a PDP by Principal Paden. She recalled Paden stating, “If I’m on a PDP, you’re going to be on a PDP,” and “Walmart is hiring.” It was important to Principal Paden to meet targets and “make the floor.”

2. Linda Paden (Principal)

We interviewed Linda Paden two times and she was represented by counsel. Principal Paden stated she was not aware of cheating and that no reports of cheating had been brought to her attention. Regarding Testing Coordinator Sheila Maxwell’s allegations in the OIR

complaint, Principal Paden claimed that Maxwell was mistaken that the test materials were not stored in the school vault. Principal Paden explained that in 2009, she decided “for some reason” to have the test materials placed in the school vault upon delivery to the school, instead of the conference room where they were usually kept. She said that the next day they were moved to the conference room, but Maxwell was probably not aware they were originally in the vault. The only reason she asked Maxwell to sign the form certifying the tests were placed into the vault when received at Finch was because SRT-1 Executive Director Davis-Williams wanted her signature in addition to the principal’s. Principal Paden denied “pressuring” Maxwell to sign the form.

Principal Paden admitted that she had been placed on a PDP more than once by Davis-Williams for not meeting targets. She is presently on a PDP. She would not say if she felt pressure to meet targets. She denied pressuring teachers to meet targets, stating that the pressure was just their “perception.” Her teachers knew she was on a PDP. She denied threatening to put teachers on PDPs for not meeting targets. She admitted telling teachers she “may” have to put them on PDP’s but claimed she never put anyone on one. She denied telling teachers that “Walmart is hiring.” She recalled somebody else saying that. Paden denied ever telling a teacher to change a grade.

When asked why teachers were offered more time with the tests and told they could not turn them in early, Principal Paden speculated that teachers who finished early may have been sent back to their class if the testing coordinator had not gotten to the conference room to receive the tests. She admitted coming in and out of the conference room while stray marks were erased from answer sheets by teachers. She could not recall if teachers had the test booklets in addition to the answer sheets.

F. Other Evidence

- In 2007-2008, Finch met AYP and received the APS 2008 Bronze Award for Greatest Gain in Percentage of Students Meeting and Exceeding Standards.
- In 2008-2009, Finch met AYP and was a “distinguished school.”
- In 2009-2010, Finch did not meet AYP or district targets.
- Principal Linda Paden was consistently on PDPs for low test scores and not meeting targets. She could not recall how often her targets had been met.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

We conclude that cheating occurred on the 2009 CRCT at Finch. Danielle Jackson, Richanda Williams, and Ashley Daniel confessed to cheating. Daniel believes that other teachers were also erasing answers. Other teachers denied cheating; however, based upon the statistical improbability of the erasures in their classrooms and the inconsistent testimony

provided by them, we conclude that Sharona Thomas-Wilson, Curtis Collier, Joya Florence, and Tyrone Shorter also cheated.

While there is no evidence that Testing Coordinator Sheila Maxwell or Principal Paden erased and changed students' answers themselves, Maxwell's actions facilitated cheating when the tests were in her custody. Principal Paden and Sheila Maxwell improperly offered teachers more time with the tests and refused to allow those who finished testing early to turn in the tests, which allowed time to cheat. Maxwell was adamant that stray marks had to be cleared from the tests, yet backed away from responsibility for verifying that it had been done. She seemed to recall that all teachers reported to the conference room, yet claimed not to notice what they were erasing in her presence. Her lack of supervision and apparent willingness to turn a blind eye facilitated cheating by at least one teacher who confessed that she erased in the presence of her peers.

It is our conclusion, from the statistical data and the other evidence that Principal Paden failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT, and adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and she is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

COAN MIDDLE SCHOOL

1550 Hosea L. Williams Dr. NE
Atlanta, GA 30317-1902

Principal: Dr. Andre Williams
Testing Coordinator: Wayne Campbell

SRT-3 Executive Director: Dr. Gloria Patterson

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Coan Middle in 2009. Twenty-one people were interviewed at Coan, some more than once. One teacher confessed to cheating. Cheating at Coan is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms, a confession, and witness testimony. Principal Andre Williams failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

A. 2009 vs. 2010

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	31.4	3.3
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	16	2
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	8(4)	2
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	18.1	3.2
High Flagged Standard Deviation	33	3.2
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	10.8	3.2

B. Flagged Classrooms

Teacher	Grade & Test	Standard Deviation
BARNETT	6 RD	23.01393141
BARNETT	6 LA	20.28747089
BARNETT	6 MA	23.00039919
HAWK	6 MA	24.79023205
SOUTHALL	6 MA	33.06486997
STUCKEY	6 RD	10.81191503
STUCKEY	6 LA	11.28838549
STUCKEY	6 MA	12.52164359
LARF	7 MA	23.74792961
TOLIVER	7 MA	28.63176724
USHRY	7 RD	14.46301261
USHRY	7 LA	13.28241752
USHRY	7 MA	15.17633931
WALLER	8 RD	12.51678332
WALLER	8 LA	11.5333268
WALLER	8 MA	11.74704368

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Overview

There are several significant facts which point to the conclusion that Coan Middle School was not managed to ensure that the 2009 CRCT results were accurately reported.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 31.4% for the 2009 CRCT. With state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped significantly from 31.4% to 3.3%.

Second, of the approximately 1,800 non-APS schools in the State of Georgia taking the 2009 CRCT, only 21 schools had a higher percentage of flagged classrooms than Coan Middle School.

Third, of the 16 flagged classrooms at Coan, all 16 had standard deviations that exceeded ten. At ten standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations from the state mean were, for all of the classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at Coan Middle School.

Fourth, is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures 74% were produced by the flagged classrooms which account for only 31.4% of the total classrooms in the school.

Finally, Principal Andre Williams created an environment that encouraged cheating. He threatened teachers with PDPs if CRCT scores did not improve. Classroom doors were closed during testing, giving teachers privacy needed to cheat. He allowed teachers to instruct the parents of low-performing students to keep their children home from school during CRCT testing so teachers could cheat for those students.

B. Narrative

In 2009, special education teachers at Coan cheated during the administration of the CRCT by using voice inflection, pointing out key words, or teaching the CRCT as if it were a class lesson. Teachers also improperly allowed students additional time to complete the CRCT. Teachers cheated because they feared job loss or being placed on a PDP for low test scores.

Coan students struggled in math and Principal Andre Williams constantly emphasized improving math scores. Ron Washington, who served as testing coordinator while Dr. Wayne Campbell was on leave, was the lead special education teacher. Washington instructed at least one teacher to call parents and tell them to keep their child at home during testing or to bring them later in the day for makeup testing. These students were typically lower performing students, but not those with testing accommodations. The teacher explained to the parents that the children could not test with his or her regular class due to "behavioral issues." A teacher observed Washington, Dr. Campbell, and Principal Williams' cars at the school late one evening during test week.

C. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Alicia Waller (Teacher)

Alicia Waller stated that Washington, the lead special education teacher and the acting test coordinator for the first two days of the 2009 CRCT testing period, instructed her to call parents of children she feared would perform poorly, and tell them to either keep their child

home from school during testing or to send them to school late. Washington told Waller that she should test these “late” or “absent” students in a small group, make-up session outside of their regular class. Waller tested those students in a small group on multiple occasions.

Waller saw Washington’s, Principal Williams’ and Testing Coordinator Campbell’s vehicles at the school late one evening during test week.

Test booklets and answer documents remained in the school long after testing ended. During one year, Waller was told to give a student a test after make-up testing was already over.

Principal Williams told Waller to make sure that all students passed the test. Waller confessed to using voice inflection, pointing out key words and using strategic pauses to prompt her students to answer correctly. When one particular student did not pick up on her voice inflection, Waller admitted helping out that student more than the others. Waller could prompt students in this way, since classroom doors remained closed during testing. Waller also admitted to allowing students more time than was allotted for the test because no one monitored the time.

Waller witnessed another special education teacher, Johnson Stuckey, prompting his students to the right answers on the CRCT. Stuckey sat down at a table with his students and administered the CRCT as if it were a lesson. Stuckey told Waller that he was doing this because Principal Williams wanted the students to pass and that they had to do this in order to make AYP.

Waller said Principal Williams put tremendous pressure on the teachers. He threatened teachers constantly with PDPs, and people who did not comply with administrators’ wishes were transferred to other schools. Waller lived in fear every year that her contract would not be renewed.

2. Cynthia Ushry (Teacher)

Cynthia Ushry stated she was not at school during testing in 2008-2009 because she was in the hospital. She could not understand how her class was flagged if she was not at the school. Ushry heard that Principal Williams solicited people to stay at school after hours and help change the tests. According to Ushry, Ron Washington and Principal Williams were very close. Ushry recalled parents coming to the school complaining about being told to keep their children home during the CRCT.

3. Francine Greer (Assistant Principal)

Francine Greer said Principal Williams put pressure on teachers to make targets. Greer wondered how certain schools were able to make targets and she noticed that, over time, more and more schools seemed to be hitting targets. She voiced concerns that the closet in Dr. Campbell’s office where the tests were stored was accessible by a master key. She raised this question during an administrative meeting where Williams, Campbell and Washington were present. Greer felt that they did not take her concerns seriously, but eventually the lock was re-keyed. Greer denied that any students not entitled to special testing accommodation were tested in small groups. She has no knowledge of administrators telling parents to keep their children home during test week.

4. Teidra Yvetta Hutchings-Hoskins (Teacher)

Teidra Yvetta Hutchings-Hoskins recalled teaching eighth grade students who could hardly read, but ended up scoring 100% on the math portion of the CRCT. Because of this type of inconsistency between student abilities and their test scores, Hoskins questioned what was occurring at Coan.

5. Deborah Mills (Teacher)

Deborah Mills taught sixth through eighth grade language arts, reading and social studies at Coan from 1994 until 2005. When Principal Williams arrived at Coan, Mills became uncomfortable with changes at the school. She and other teachers were amazed by the performance of some students on the CRCT, as their high scores did not seem to match their low performance in the classroom. Word spread around the school that administrators changed the students' answer documents. Principal Williams heavily emphasized making AYP and meeting targets.

6. Quentin Southall (Teacher)

Quentin Southall reported that Principal Williams would place teachers on a PDP for low test scores. Southall was surprised by the test scores of some of the special education students in that their scores were much higher than their apparent abilities in the classroom. Southall heard that Principal Williams asked a teacher, Frances Warner, to stay after school one day to change students' CRCT answer sheets.

7. Deborah McRae (Teacher)

Deborah McRae stated that while she worked at Coan, Principal Williams and Dr. Campbell asked her to promote students to the next grade who did not actually pass. She refused to do so. Principal Williams advised McRae that if she wanted to remain at Coan, she needed to be more compliant. McRae verbally reported her concerns to APS' Office of Internal Resolution (OIR), but instead of support, OIR told McRae to respect the authority of Principal Williams. McRae stated she also emailed Dr. Beverly Hall and Dr. Kathy Augustine, but never received a response. McRae advised that Principal Williams told Waller to contact several parents of her students and tell them to keep their child at home during CRCT testing. Williams told Waller to tell parents the reason their child had to stay home was due to behavioral issues. These students were lower performing and not likely pass to the CRCT. McRae stated that Waller complied with Williams' instruction and that ultimately some parents came to the school and complained.

D. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Dr. Andre Williams (Principal)

Principal Williams previously worked in the New York school system where Dr. Beverly Hall recruited him to come to Atlanta. Williams became Principal at Coan in 2005, but was terminated in 2009.

Principal Williams denied cheating. He told investigators he had no motive to cheat because at the time of the 2009 CRCT, he had already accepted another job in another district. However, Williams stated that “cheating is so intertwined in Atlanta Public Schools.” It is “such a part of what the culture is all about.” Everyone knows that cheating is going on. Principals joke about cheating at their meetings. Everyone knows about the cheating at Parks. The APS Administration conducted “investigations” into cheating over the years, but nothing ever happened.

In 2006, after his first year at APS, Principal Williams claimed that he filed an OIR complaint about the test scores at Coan because so many students passed when there was “no way in hell” they could have passed. Students might actually increase their scores by five points in a year, but not by 15 or 20. He stated that Colinda Howard from OIR came to Coan and investigated. She ultimately told Principal Williams that the students performed well due to his work.

Principal Williams thought he cleaned up the cheating when he arrived at Coan, which explains why Coan’s test scores dropped. He heard about how the cheating occurred in 2009. Ron Washington wanted to be assistant principal and Williams heard that Washington changed the tests after testing was over. The majority of the erasures were in special education, and Washington, the special education administrator, had served as the testing coordinator for the first three days of CRCT testing in 2009.

According to Williams, to be promoted, you must show growth in test scores. People accomplish this goal “by any means necessary” in order to get \$100,000 per year jobs. APS is about movement and prestige. “If you cheat, you can move kids, you are going to get promoted,” and everyone knows it. Principal Williams stated he could get a meeting with the President before he could see Dr. Hall.

2. Dr. Wayne Campbell (Testing Coordinator)

Dr. Campbell moved to Jamaica. We attempted to reach him by telephone, but he did not return our calls.

3. Johnson Stuckey (Teacher)

We attempted to reach Johnson Stuckey for an interview but received no response.

4. Ron Washington (Special Education Administrator)

Ron Washington denied any participation in, or knowledge of, cheating. During the first two days of the 2009 CRCT, Washington had sole access to the tests, but said he secured the tests each day. He acknowledged that it was easier to change tests if students were pulled for small group testing. During his second interview, Washington acknowledged that some students were taken to the cafeteria to take the re-test if they were a “big disruption.” He states this only occurred a few times during the years he was at Coan. He denied instructing any teachers to contact parents and tell them not to bring the child to school. Washington said he was aware that Waller called parents, but that she either did so on her own, or another administrator directed her

to do so. Washington stated he questioned Alicia Waller about her actions, but did not recall what explanation she offered.

E. Other Evidence

- In 2007-2008 and 2008-2009, Coan met AYP. In 2010, Coan did not meet AYP.
- Between 2009 and 2010 Coan saw a double digit increase (11%, 13% and 23%) in the number of students across sixth, seventh, and eighth grades, respectively, that failed math on the CRCT.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

We conclude that Alicia Waller cheated on the CRCT. We conclude that Principal Andre Williams and Ron Washington knew of and allowed cheating at Coan.

Based on the statistical evidence and the evidence we have found at schools with similar statistical data, we believe that other flagged teachers cheated. However, we lack sufficient evidence to determine which additional teachers cheated.

We also conclude Ron Washington instructed a teacher to tell parents of certain low-performing children to keep their children home during testing or bring them to school late. These students were then tested in a small group. Although Washington denied he gave this instruction, he was aware that Waller had done this, but apparently took no action. He also admitted that “behavior problem” students would be pulled out and tested in a small group.

We further conclude that Principal Andre Williams failed in his ultimate responsibility for testing activities and for ensuring the ethical administration of, and proper security for, the 2009 CRCT. It is our conclusion from the statistical data and the other evidence secured in this investigation that Principal Williams failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT and adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and he is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

11/29/2010

Graded Content

10-0110-25-11

EXHIBIT

DOBBS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

2025 Jonesboro Road
Atlanta, Georgia 30315

Principal: Dana Evans
Testing Coordinator: Warren Edwards

SRT-2 Executive Director: Michael Pitts

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Dobbs Elementary in 2009 and other years. Fifty-four people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Four teachers confessed to cheating. Cheating at Dobbs is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms, confessions and witness testimony. Principal Dana Evans was one of the few APS employees to accept responsibility for cheating that occurred in her school, and she is to be commended. Nevertheless, she received multiple reports of cheating at Dobbs and therefore knew or should have known of the cheating occurring at this school.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	33.3	6.9
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	30	6
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	14(11)	4(1)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	7.3	3.5
High Flagged Standard Deviation	21.3	4.2
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.2	3.1

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Narrative

Since 2005, cheating on the CRCT has occurred at Dobbs Elementary. Under the administration of the previous principal, Carolyn Brown, CRCT materials were improperly returned to teachers after testing hours. Wanda Harmon brought the CRCT answer sheets and test booklets around on a cart, distributed them to teachers, and picked them up the next day. Thus teachers had possession of both the testing booklet and CRCT student answer sheets outside the testing period, and were able to erase and change students' answers.

Principal Evans became principal in 2007, and cheating continued at Dobbs under her leadership, but not at her direction. She denied any knowledge of cheating, but accepts professional responsibility for all cheating that occurred at Dobbs during her tenure as principal. We commend her for accepting responsibility – she is one of the few in APS to do so.

Principal Evans regularly employed volunteer proctors (generally parents) who had no training in test administration. At least one teacher witnessed a parent-proctor prompting students on the CRCT.

Multiple fifth grade teachers testified that their incoming students lacked the skills required to score as highly as they did on their fourth grade CRCT. Fourth grade teachers, Derrick Broadwater, Shayla Smith, and Angela Williamson prompted their students to change answers during the administration of the CRCT. Angela Williamson threatened students by telling them they would have to repeat the fourth grade if they ever told of the cheating.

In addition to prompting, Derrick Broadwater and Shayla Smith possessed a photocopy of the CRCT. They used the photocopy to prepare students for the upcoming questions on the CRCT. Derrick Broadwater and Angela Williamson confessed to prompting students during the administration of the CRCT.

Shayla Smith prompted Danielle Blair's students on the 2010 CRCT. Shayla Smith said to another teacher "I had to give them [her students] the answers, those kids were dumb as hell."

Arlette Crump, a second grade teacher, prompted students on the 2009 CRCT. Dessa Curb, a special education teacher, prompted students on the CRCT. Two paraprofessionals assigned to Dessa Curb's classroom all testified that Curb not only prompted, but also erased and changed students' answer sheets.

Sidnye Fells, who is no longer with APS, spoke to Principal Evans about her suspicions that the fourth grade team cheated, and about testing violations at Dobbs in general. Principal Evans changed the subject and took no action. Malcolm Brooks, who is no longer with APS, also spoke to Principal Evans about his suspicions of cheating by the fourth grade team. Principal Evans told Brooks that the fourth grade teachers simply had a rapport with their students and knew how to motivate them.

Naomi Williams told Principal Evans about Curb's cheating, but Principal Evans took no action and instead fired Williams.

Principal Evans instructed Tameka Grant to falsify CRCT records to indicate that students who failed to meet expectations in 2009 received remedial help when they received no such help. Tameka Grant met with GBI agents pursuant to this investigation, and informed them of Principal Evans' instruction. Tameka Grant said she was terminated by Principal Evans a few days later.

Principal Evans informed teachers at a staff meeting that if she were placed on a PDP for low test scores, she would place every teacher on a PDP for low test scores as well.

Teachers suspected cheating at Dobbs, but did not report it for fear of retaliation. SRT-2 Executive Director Michael Pitts, speaking about this investigation, told the teachers, "If you know something you are incriminating yourselves." Michael Pitts also said that some teachers at other schools had attempted to retaliate against a principal and that these teachers told the GBI about "all this stuff" that principal had done, "and guess what, that principal is still there."

B. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Vera Yates (Teacher)

Vera Yates proctored the 2009 CRCT in Angela Williamson's classroom. Yates saw Williamson prompt students to change incorrect answers during the administration of the test. Williamson walked around the classroom, stood over students' shoulders, and pointed to the correct answers. Williamson instructed Yates: "You didn't see that." Williamson gave answers to the children she knew would perform poorly on the CRCT.

During the week of the 2009 CRCT, Yates saw Principal Evans and Assistant Principal Mario Watkins in Principal Evans' conference room after school with the CRCT materials. Principal Evans was seated at a table with a pencil in her hand and a stack of CRCT booklets in front of her. Mario Watkins stood beside Principal Evans. Yates made eye contact with Principal Evans, and quickly walked away. Yates never spoke with Principal Evans about the incident. Yates stated that her performance reviews steadily declined after she witnessed Principal Evans and Watkins in the conference room with a stack of CRCT booklets. Shortly thereafter, Yates' contract was non-renewed. Yates believes Principal Evans is retaliating against her because of what she witnessed.

2. Diane Brewer (Substitute Teacher)

Diane Brewer is a retired teacher that often substitute teaches at Dobbs. Brewer stated there are many allegations at Dobbs that the fourth grade teachers, Derrick Broadwater, Shayla Smith, and Angela Williamson cheat on the CRCT. Diane Brewer further stated that many fifth grade teachers expressed frustration to her because the incoming former fourth grade students could not perform at a fifth grade level.

3. Tameka Grant (Teacher)

Tameka Grant began working at Dobbs in October of 2009. Immediately upon her assignment to the fourth grade, she began receiving warnings and hearing that other teachers on the fourth grade team were known to cheat on the CRCT.

Shayla Smith administered the 2010 CRCT to the students of Danielle Blair, a new teacher in 2009-2010. Tameka Grant testified that Danielle Blair's students were some of the lowest performers at Dobbs on the benchmark exams, but scored among the highest classrooms on the CRCT.

Principal Evans instructed Tameka Grant to falsify records to indicate that students who failed to meet expectations on the 2009 CRCT received remedial instruction, even if the students did not receive such instruction. Tameka Grant further testified that Principal Evans told all teachers that if Principal Evans was placed on a PDP by Michael Pitts for low CRCT scores, then Principal Evans would place every teacher on a PDP as well.

Tameka Grant was interviewed by the GBI on February 9, 2011. On February 11, 2011, Principal Evans informed Tameka Grant that her contract would not be renewed with APS for the upcoming school year.

4. Arlette Crump (Teacher)

Arlette Crump stated that “certain people at the school have a habit of cheating.” She was referring to allegations that Shayla Smith, Derrick Broadwater, and Angela Williamson cheated on the CRCT. Crump testified that two students told her that the fourth grade teachers cheated on the CRCT in 2009. Specifically, the students told Arlette Crump that Derrick Broadwater and Angela Williamson took them to the science lab before the CRCT and “prepped” them with a copy of the CRCT. The students told Arlette Crump that the photocopied test had the words “CRCT DO NOT COPY” printed on it. The students told Crump that Angela Williamson threatened the students that if they ever told, they would have to go back and repeat the fourth grade.

The father of one student contacted Crump and relayed the story to her as well. Crump reported the cheating to Principal Evans. Principal Evans’ response to Arlette Crump was that she did not know how that could have happened since there were monitors in the classroom. Principal Evans asked Crump if she knew of any other cheating. Crump told Principal Evans that she had heard Broadwater and Williamson gave students answers during testing and that Smith had taken the accelerated reading test herself in place of her students.

Crump thinks that word must have gotten back to Broadwater because one of the students later told Crump that Broadwater told the students that the test was a coaching manual and not a copy of the CRCT.

Crump admits to “bumping” students’ desks when she noticed a wrong answer on the CRCT and instructing the student to “look at that again.” She stated that Principal Evans “silently condones” cheating.

5. Brook Hanson (Teacher)

Brook Hanson stated that many of her incoming fifth grade students performed at a much lower level than their fourth grade CRCT scores indicated. Hanson stated that Principal Evans informed the teachers that if she were placed on a PDP by Michael Pitts for low CRCT scores, then Principal Evans would place all teachers on a PDP for low test scores as well.

6. Francis Leach (Teacher)

The same student who told Arlette Crump about cheating on the 2009 CRCT told Francis Leach that Angela Williamson cheated on the 2009 CRCT. Leach also heard claims at Dobbs that Shayla Smith, Derrick Broadwater, and Angela Williamson cheated on the CRCT. Vera Yates told Leach that Williamson prompted students with correct answers on the 2009 CRCT while Yates proctored in Williamson’s classroom. Leach also stated that Dessa Curb’s students always performed well on the CRCT, but most of them could not read.

Leach feared that he would lose his job if he reported cheating. Leach stated that he called an Atlanta Journal-Constitution reporter to report cheating within Dobbs. The reporter emailed Leach at his APS email address, causing Leach to fear APS would discover he reported cheating, so he never spoke to the reporter. Leach stated that, while attending a professional development workshop, an APS official, identified only as Dr. Washington, instructed teachers

that they “were not to blast APS” when interviewed, and that teachers were “only to answer the questions asked.”

7. Binta Moncur (Teacher)

Binta Moncur testified that several teachers warned her about cheating in the fourth grade when she began at Dobbs in 2008. She also received warnings to stay away from Derrick Broadwater, Angela Williamson, and Shayla Smith. Malcolm Brooks, another teacher, explained to Moncur that Broadwater, Smith, and Williamson copied the CRCT and used it to cheat. Brooks also informed Moncur that the teacher she replaced refused to participate in the cheating scheme, and no longer teaches at Dobbs.

During the week of CRCT testing in 2009, Broadwater and Smith approached Moncur and asked her how many of her students would exceed standards on the CRCT. Moncur was confused by the question, since it was impossible to tell midway through testing how many students would exceed standards. Smith had a sheet of paper and was poised to write down Moncur’s answer.

8. Danielle Blair (Teacher)

Shayla Smith administered the 2010 CRCT to Danielle Blair’s students. Danielle Blair testified that one of her students told her and the entire class that Smith gave that student answers on the CRCT. Blair spoke to Smith, and Smith confirmed the student’s story. Blair recounted a conversation she had with Schajuan Jones, a fifth grade teacher who taught Shayla Smith’s former fourth grade students in 2010. Jones stated that Shayla Smith’s former students could not perform at the level they performed for Shayla Smith on common assessments in Jones’ classroom.

9. Naomi Williams (Paraprofessional)

Naomi Williams was a paraprofessional assigned to Dessa Curb’s classroom. During the 2009 CRCT window, but after the testing period, Williams witnessed Curb erasing and changing students’ answer sheets. Curb kept the tests approximately two hours after the testing period ended. Williams gave the investigators photographs that depict Curb’s CRCT test booklets and answer sheets spread out on a table in preparation for erasing. The photographs are included as **Attachment A**. Curb instructed Williams to take a particular student to the back of the classroom “and erase this mess and get with [the student] about the right answers.” Williams witnessed Principal Evans in the classroom after the testing period when the CRCT booklets and answer sheets were still in the classroom.

Williams reported Curb’s actions to Principal Evans, but she “acted like she didn’t want to hear it.” Later that day, Principal Evans called Williams’ home and told her son that Williams was not to report to Dobbs, and instead to report to the downtown office. Williams was terminated from APS.

10. Erica Gober (Paraprofessional)

Erica Gober took the photographs included as Attachment A on her cellular telephone. Gober was assigned to Curb's classroom after Naomi Williams was disciplined at Dobbs in 2009. Gober stated that because she heard that Curb cheated on the CRCT, she took the pictures so she would not later be accused of tampering with the CRCT materials. Gober stated that she took the pictures when Curb improperly left the classroom to take the students to their next class.

Gober heard that fourth grade teachers and Curb cheated on the CRCT. She also heard that Williams tried to report cheating to Principal Evans and was terminated.

11. Sidnye Fells (Teacher)

Sidnye Fells was a fourth and fifth grade teacher at Dobbs from 2005 to 2008, when she resigned. Fells served under Principal Dana Evans, and her predecessor, Carolyn Brown. On February 18, 2010, after reading a news story about cheating in APS, Fells sent a letter detailing the cheating she witnessed at Dobbs to John Grant of the Professional Standards Commission. A copy of that letter is included as **Attachment B**.

Fells was instructed by Carolyn Brown to mark every student present at Dobbs even if they were absent. Fells refused, and marked her students absent when they were absent. On at least one occasion, Fells' attendance records were altered. Fells took a picture of one of the altered attendance records, and a copy is included as **Attachment C**.

Principal Evans often assigned volunteer proctors for the CRCT. The volunteers were not trained in any way, and Fells witnessed at least one volunteer proctor prompting students to change their answers on the CRCT. Under Principal Evans' administration, CRCT materials were not counted at the end of the testing period, allowing teachers to retain copies of the CRCT. Principal Evans did not make announcements over the intercom system telling the teachers when testing was over. As a consequence, teachers improperly kept their tests after the testing period, and allowed their students to work on the test longer than the allotted time. Fells voiced her concerns to Principal Evans, but no changes were made.

Fells recalls a specific special education student who scored higher than any other student in the school on the reading section of the CRCT. Fells heard that the special education teachers read the CRCT to their students and used voice inflection to cheat. Fells stated that she no longer fears retaliation since she is no longer employed by APS, but that other teachers would be afraid to be truthful.

12. Malcolm Brooks (Teacher)

The skills of fifth grade students entering Malcolm Brooks' class did not match their performance on the fourth grade CRCT. One student could barely read or perform basic computations and exceeded standards across the board on his fourth grade CRCT. Malcolm Brooks believes Derrick Broadwater, Shayla Smith, and Angela Williamson cheated on these students' fourth grade CRCT exams. Brooks met with Principal Evans to discuss his concerns. Principal Evans stated that the fourth grade teachers had a rapport with their students and were able to motivate them in ways Brooks could not.

Brooks left the APS system and now teaches in North Carolina. One reason he left APS was because APS was “selling these kids short,” by “giving them a false sense of accomplishment.”

13. Anthony Greene (Teacher)

Anthony Greene stated that incoming fifth grade students performed at a lower level than their fourth grade CRCT score would indicate. He testified that he and other fifth grade teachers believe the fourth grade teachers cheated on the CRCT in 2009 and other years.

14. Mario Watkins (Assistant Principal)

Assistant Principal Watkins stated that Principal Evans did not place teachers on PDPs for low test scores. He denied any knowledge of cheating on the 2009 CRCT or in any other year. When he viewed the wrong-to-right data, including the standard deviations for the teachers at Dobbs, he stated “it’s on them,” indicating that only the teachers were involved in any cheating at Dobbs.

15. Schajuan Jones (Teacher)

Jones heard Shayla Smith yelling at a student because the student told people that Smith cheated on the CRCT. She also heard Smith tell another teacher, “I had to give them [her students] the answers, those kids are dumb as hell.”

Jones heard a student tell Principal Evans that Smith was cheating on the CRCT in 2010. That same week, Jones overheard two students discussing how Smith gave them answers on the CRCT.

C. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Derrick Broadwater (Teacher)

Derrick Broadwater admitted he prompted students to re-read particular questions he noticed they answered incorrectly on the 2009 CRCT and in other years. Broadwater testified he was forced to prompt students to change their answers on the CRCT because when the students came into his class from the third grade, their skills were far below the expected level. Broadwater stated that at the time he prompted students he did not believe it was wrong or a testing violation, but he has since realized it was wrong and a testing violation.

Principal Evans told all teachers that if she was placed on a PDP by Michael Pitts for low CRCT scores, then every teacher would be placed on a PDP as well.

Broadwater described a meeting between the teachers at Dobbs and Pitts during the 2010-2011 school year. In that meeting, Michael Pitts told the teachers that with regard to being interviewed for this investigation, “If you know something you are incriminating yourselves.” Pitts went on to say that some teachers at other schools had attempted to retaliate against a principal and that these teachers told the GBI about “all this stuff” that principal had done, “and guess what, that principal is still there.” Broadwater interpreted this to mean that if teachers

report cheating to us they are only hurting themselves, and that adverse action would not be taken against principals by APS.

2. Shayla Smith (Teacher)

Shayla Smith denied any knowledge of cheating, and denied participating in any cheating. Principal Evans told the Dobbs teachers that if she was placed on a PDP by Michael Pitts for low CRCT scores, then all teachers at Dobbs would be placed on PDPs as well.

3. Angela Williamson (Teacher)

Angela Williamson admitted to improperly prompting students during the administration of the 2008 and 2009 CRCT by telling the students to “go back over” a specific question when the student answered the question incorrectly. She denied prompting any students on the 2007 CRCT or in any years prior. Angela Williamson stated that in 2009, her proctor, Tamara Franco also prompted students in this way. Williamson denied saying to any of her proctors “you didn’t see that.” Williamson testified that Principal Evans never instructed her or any other teacher to cheat. Williamson returned her CRCT tests in a particular order, and sometimes the next day the tests would be returned out of order.

4. Warren Edwards (Testing Coordinator)

Warren Edwards denies any knowledge of cheating on the CRCT. He stated that the only way to explain the high number of wrong-to-right erasures at Dobbs was that the teachers must have given students answers to the CRCT questions in the classroom.

5. Dessa Curb (Special Education)

Dessa Curb initially testified that she never left CRCT materials alone with a paraprofessional, as that is a testing violation. When confronted with the pictures taken by Erica Gober, she recanted her testimony, and stated that if she had left the room, she would have locked the CRCT materials in her closet. Curb did not explain how the CRCT materials ended up on the table as depicted in the photographs.

Curb admits she filled in answers to questions that students left blank on the CRCT. She further admitted that when students selected more than one answer on the CRCT, she would erase the wrong answer. When confronted with the testimony of witnesses who saw her erase and change answers and give students answers for the CRCT, Curb claimed she was “being set up.”

6. Dana Evans (Principal)

Principal Evans stated that she never received a report of a testing violation or heard any concerns from teachers regarding cheating. She further stated that certain fifth grade teachers reported problems with their incoming students. Evans instructed the fifth grade teachers to provide her with the names of the students and the reasons they were not performing, but she believed the teachers’ responses were vague. She thought the allegations the fifth grade teachers made were a defense mechanism to compensate for their scores not being as high as the fourth

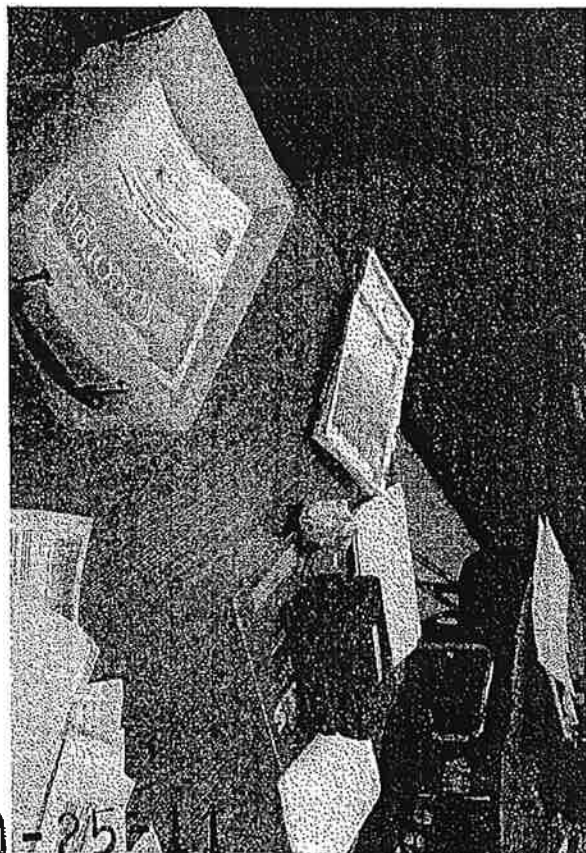
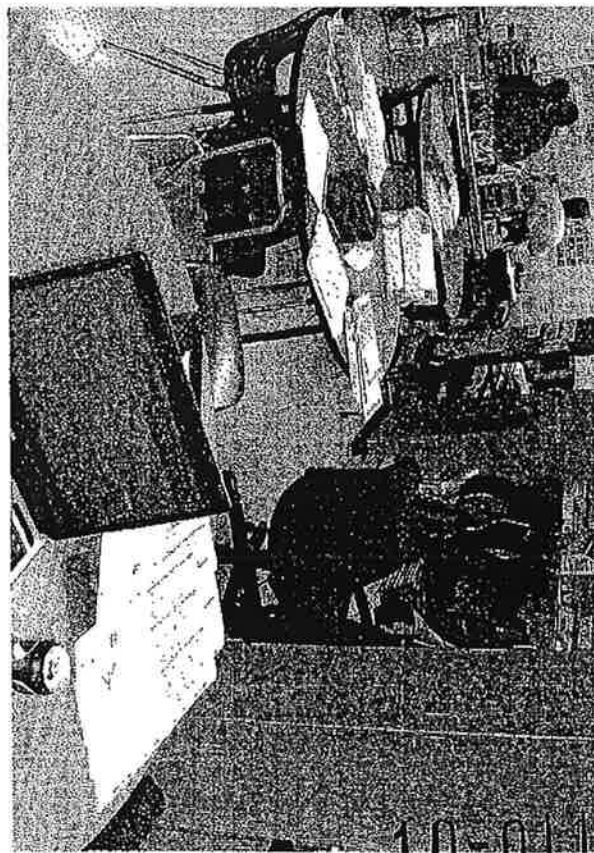
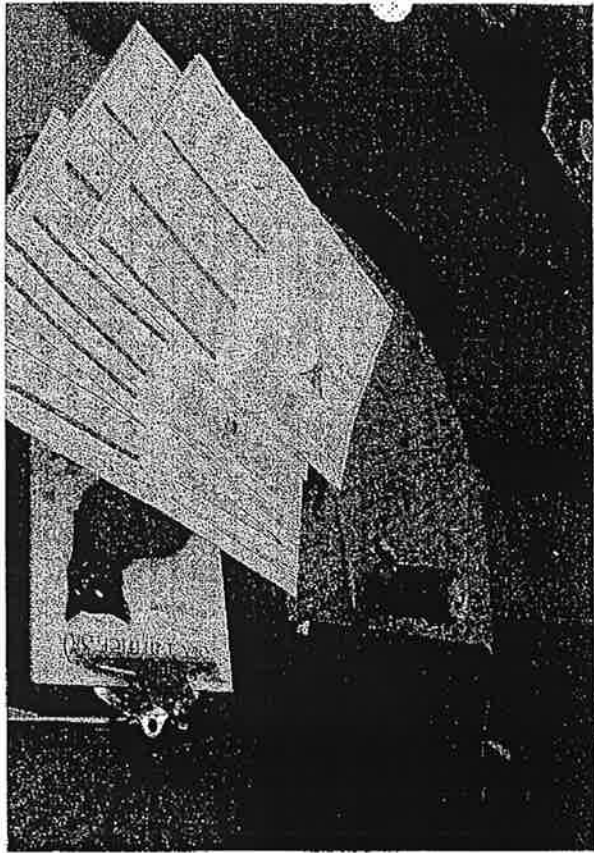
grade teachers' scores. Principal Evans believes "people cheat because they have a flaw in their moral character."

Principal Evans testified that Dobbs was a problem school full of problem employees. She specifically identified Naomi Williams. When confronted with Williams' statements to investigators, Principal Evans stated that Ms. Williams had a vendetta against her because Principal Evans terminated her. Principal Evans denied ever being in a conference room with CRCT materials. She also denied ever seeing Dessa Curb's CRCT materials spread out on a table. Principal Evans stated that she has tried to instill discipline in the staff and faculty at Dobbs, with varying degrees of success. She believes that many teachers have or would attempt to retaliate against her discipline by fabricating stories about cheating. She denied ever cheating or condoning cheating.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

We conclude that Arlette Crump, Dessa Curb, Derrick Broadwater, Angela Williamson, and Shayla Smith cheated on the 2009 CRCT.

We further conclude that Principal Evans knew, or should have known, that cheating on the CRCT occurred at Dobbs in 2009, and in other years. Multiple teachers testified that they brought concerns to Principal Evans regarding cheating, but Evans dismissed their concerns and took no action. Former employees testified that they informed Principal Evans of cheating and were terminated. Principal Evans testified that there were many bad teachers and paraprofessionals at Dobbs, and that she believed the ones she terminated fabricated stories in an attempt at retaliation. Principal Evans was one of the few APS employees to acknowledge that, as a leader, she was responsible for everything that happened in her school. She denies cheating, condoning cheating, or having any knowledge of cheating. We conclude that Principal Evans did not cheat or direct anyone to cheat, but conclude that she should have known cheating happened at Dobbs.



10-0110-25-11

EXHIBIT

February 18, 2010

Georgia Professional Standards Commission
Attn: Mr. John Grant
Two Peachtree, suite 6000
Atlanta, GA 30303-3141

Dear Mr. John Grant:

Thank you, again, for allowing me the time to voice my concerns and give testimony of cheating/unlawful behavior that I have witnessed at Dobbs Elementary School. I began my teaching career at Dobbs Elementary in the beginning of the 2003-04 school year as a 4th grade teacher. From then until the end of the 2007-08 school year, I was employed with Atlanta Public Schools as a teacher of 4th and 5th grades at Dobbs Elementary School.

During my first year at Dobbs Elementary, and each year following, I was pressured to cheat on the CRCT. I was told that we needed to "make the floor" by any means necessary, and that if our school did not make AYP and meet targets, we (teachers) could be put on PDPs and possibly lose our jobs. Teachers were threatened and intimidated as a whole. From the beginning of the 2007-08 year, under the new leadership of Dana Evans, both intimidation of some teachers and favoritism of others (based on test scores) began. Teachers who had high scoring classes were given such special privileges as bonus supply money and the opportunities to attend conferences that I was not allowed to attend. In one instance, my supply request list was "lost" even though it was submitted in a pack with the lists of other coworkers who all received their complete orders without issue. I had the lowest scoring class on grade level.

From my first year, I saw and heard mention of several different cheating strategies. They are:

- Once the seal is broken the first day of testing, you can look ahead to the next day's test, remember or write down as many questions as possible, and teach them to the students that afternoon or the morning before the test.
- The principal/administrator can ensure that certain teachers have no proctor while others do. This makes it easier for certain teachers to cheat.
- Proctors with no orientation/training who were parent volunteers, rather than APS employees, were placed in certain classrooms, as well.
- A test booklet can be taken home. The person can either study it, photocopy the questions, or simply copy the questions by hand. (The administrator in charge of the booklet count will purposely overlook the inaccurate booklet count at the end of testing time that day.)
- Some teachers may give students certain signals, each for a different letter - A, B, C, or D.
- A teacher walking past a student may softly kick the desk or chair of a student, alerting that student that he/she has marked the wrong answer.
- A teacher/administrator reading the test aloud to a student may emphasize the correct answer with the volume of his/her voice.

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- A teacher may point to a question/answer and tell the student to "look it over" in order to alert that student that he/she has marked the wrong answer.
- A teacher/administrator can ask that student mark their initial answers on a sheet of scrap paper. Once that teacher/administrator approves the answers, the student can then copy them to the real answer sheet.
- Administrators can return the booklets and answer sheets to the teachers when the state proctors have left the building.
- Administrators can access the booklets and answer sheets and change the answers, since they have full access to all test materials during the week of testing.
- Teachers/administrators can change answers AS students are taking the test, or simply verbally tell the student to change it.
- Administrators can change attendance figures in order to meet the attendance targets.
- Administrators can tell low-scoring students to stay home certain days of the test, or the entire week.
- Administrators can instruct teachers to mark their entire class present, whether it is true or not, in order to meet attendance targets.

During my tenure at Dobbs Elementary, I was told at times to mark all students present, whether they were actually present or not. When I marked a student absent anyway, the "A" (for absent) was crossed off when my attendance sheet was returned. And, I saw many attendance figures changed in the data base. This happened during my last two years at Dobbs Elementary, from 2006-2008.

During my earlier years at Dobbs Elementary, under the administration of Carolyn Brown, an administrator brought my students' test booklets and answer sheets back to me after the state proctors had left the building. When I asked why I was getting them back, I was told that I was supposed to check over the answer sheets for any stray marks and erase any that I saw. When I asked why I needed the test booklets as well, I was told that they wanted to keep everything together. I said I did not need them, and was told to "just look over them anyway". I never touched them.

During my last year at Dobbs Elementary, under the administration of Dana Evans, the pressure to cheat escalated and I witnessed more unlawful testing practices. Teachers who spoke up against her policies and opinions were punished. We were constantly threatened with PDPs. Some of my coworkers had no proctor, I was there when Evans was informed of this. She appeared surprised, but made no effort to assign them one. The next day, there was still no proctor. (It is my understanding that a proctor is not needed if the class count is below 30 students.) My coworker and I were given one proctor to share between our classes. About every 15 minutes, this proctor would come back and forth between our classes, talking to the students as they tested. She obviously had not been trained or had an orientation. I had never seen her working in the building before. And, I do not recall her name. There was some confusion about the break times. And, some teachers would take breaks during the test while others were still testing. Many teachers continued testing long after the signal was given for the test to end. Before testing, when I spoke with Mrs. Evans about the pressure to match scores that had been obtained by cheating, I was not taken seriously. To my knowledge, nothing was done by her to investigate or stop any possible cheating.

Finally, here is a list of former APS employees who worked at Dobbs Elementary. They are all willing to give their personal testimony of the cheating that has been allowed there for so many years.

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EXHIBIT _____

TOOMER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

65 Rogers Street
Atlanta, Georgia 30317

Principal: Dr. Tonya Saunders
Testing Coordinator: Hezekiah Wardlow

SRT-3 Executive Director: Dr. Gloria Patterson

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Toomer Elementary in 2009 and in other years. Fifteen people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Two teachers confessed to cheating. Cheating at Toomer is evidenced by confessions and witness testimony. Principal Tonya Saunders and Testing Coordinator Hezekiah Wardlow instructed teachers to cheat on the CRCT and the Fifth Grade Writing Test. Principal Tonya Saunders failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	21.4	0
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	9	0
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	4(3)	0
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	6.6	0
High Flagged Standard Deviation	14.6	0
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.8	0

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Narrative

Principal Saunders instructed teachers to prompt students to change their answers during the 2009 CRCT, and to look ahead in the CRCT booklet and make sure the students were prepared for the material to be tested.

Hezekiah Wardlow instructed Latoya Stiffend to arrange her students in a way that would ensure that the lower achieving students received easier Fifth Grade Writing Test prompts.

Teachers used voice inflection to prompt their students during the administration of the 2009 CRCT.

B. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Lysandra Hardaway (Teacher)

Lysandra Hardaway admitted to prompting students by inflecting her voice to emphasize the correct answer during the administration of the 2009 CRCT.

Hardaway testified that there were no proctors in the classrooms at Toomer, only monitors who would occasionally walk into individual classrooms.

2. Sheila Brown (Teacher)

Sheila Brown confessed to prompting students by inflecting her voice to emphasize the correct answer during the administration of the 2009 CRCT. She also admitted to prompting students to change incorrect answers during the administration of the 2009 CRCT.

3. Megan Dosmann (Teacher)

During the administration of the 2006 CRCT, Principal Saunders instructed Megan Dosmann to look ahead at the next section. Saunders said, “Your students better know everything on the math section.” Dosmann testified that she felt that Principal Saunders was encouraging her to cheat, or “feeling her out” to see if she would cheat.

Dosmann heard that the CRCT was photocopied at Toomer, but she never saw a photocopy of any CRCT.

Megan Dosmann saw Denita Carr prompting students during the administration of the CRCT. She was unsure of the year, but knew it to be between 2005 and 2009.

4. Latoya Royal Stiffend (Teacher)

Testing Coordinator Wardlow approached Latoya Stiffend during the Fifth Grade Writing Test and suggested she seat students in an order such that students would obtain writing topics that would improperly maximize students’ scores. Stiffend denied that she seated her students in the order Testing Coordinator Wardlow suggested.

C. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Tonya Saunders (Principal)

Principal Saunders testified that she was in the hospital undergoing emergency surgery during the administration of the 2009 CRCT. Testing Coordinator Wardlow was in charge of the school during the 2009 CRCT. She testified that the tests were kept in Wardlow’s office, and that she did not have a key to his office.

Principal Saunders admitted to instructing her teachers to look ahead in the CRCT booklet and make sure that they taught the covered material before the next testing session. She admitted instructing her teachers to tell individual students to check their answers when the teacher noticed they had answered a particular question incorrectly. She later recanted and denied making both admissions.

Principal Saunders placed teachers on PDPs for low test scores, and given this pressure she was not surprised that they cheated. She was surprised that some students passed the CRCT because their classroom performance did not match their CRCT scores. She stated that as long as teachers met targets and students passed, she did not question how CRCT scores occurred.

2. Hezekiah Wardlow (Testing Coordinator)

Testing Coordinator Hezekiah Wardlow denied ever instructing Latoya Stiffend to seat her students in a particular order for the Fifth Grade Writing Test. Principal Saunders had a key to his office. A representative from SRT-3 was present with him during the CRCT testing window.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

We conclude that Principal Saunders instructed her teachers to cheat by prompting students to change answers on the 2009 CRCT. We also conclude that Principal Saunders instructed her teachers to cheat by looking ahead in the 2009 CRCT test booklet to improperly discover what material would be tested in those sections. Testing Coordinator Wardlow instructed Latoya Stiffend to seat her students in a way that would alter the results of the 2009 Fifth Grade Writing Test. Sheila Brown and Lysandra Hardaway cheated by prompting their students to change answers on the 2009 CRCT.

It is also our conclusion, from the statistical data and the other evidence secured in this investigation, that Principal Tonya Saunders failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT, and adequately supervise the testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and she is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

BENTEEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

200 Cassanova Street
Atlanta, Georgia 30315

Principal: Dr. Diana Quisenberry
Testing Coordinator: Theresia Copeland

SRT-2 Executive Director: Michael Pitts

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Benteen Elementary in 2009. Thirty-six people at this school were interviewed, some more than once. Cheating at Benteen is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms and witness testimony. The principal, testing coordinator, and math coach improperly viewed the CRCT early and “tutored” failing students by giving them the test questions and answers. The testing coordinator changed answers and Principal Diana Quisenberry knew that answers were changed. Principal Diana Quisenberry falsified attendance records and failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

A. 2009 vs. 2010

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	43.1	0
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	22	0
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	9(8)	0
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	12.5	0
High Flagged Standard Deviation	23.8	0
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.1	0

B. Flagged Classrooms

Teacher	Grade & Test	Standard Deviation
KIRK	1 RD	4.816114506
KIRK	1 LA	7.106036004
KIRK	1 MA	6.592589571
EVANS	3 RD	17.90282248
EVANS	3 LA	3.317897736
EVANS	3 MA	13.89030544
RHODES	3 RD	15.96607601
RHODES	3 MA	11.23728008
SMITH C	3 RD	20.56060439
SMITH C	3 LA	3.109935704
SMITH C	3 MA	20.84487831
BENTEEN	4 RD	4.88559548
BONDS	4 RD	16.26859827
BONDS	4 LA	18.51439902
BONDS	4 MA	14.68023992
DIMES SMITH	4 RD	5.336297633
DIMES SMITH	4 LA	3.55988236
PAULK	5 RD	18.37528305
PAULK	5 LA	8.336628077
VACTER	5 RD	22.37132955
VACTER	5 LA	23.81421432
VACTER	5 MA	13.49026513

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Overview

There are several facts which point to the conclusion that Benteen Elementary School was not managed to ensure that the 2009 CRCT results were accurately reported to the Georgia Department of Education.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 43.1% for the 2009 CRCT.

Second, of the approximately 1,800 non-APS schools in the state taking the 2009 CRCT only ten schools had a higher percentage of flagged classrooms than Benteen Elementary School.

Third, with state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped significantly from 43.1% to 0%.

Fourth, of the 22 flagged classrooms at Benteen Elementary School, 17 (77% of the total) had standard deviations that exceeded five, and 13 classrooms exceeded ten standard deviations. At five standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard deviations the probability is no better than one in a trillion. The deviations from the state mean were, for a number of classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at this school.

Fifth is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures at Benteen, 78.5% were produced by the flagged classrooms which account for only 43.1% of the total classrooms in the school.

Finally, Principal Quisenberry, Testing Coordinator Theresia Copeland, and Math Coach Dr. Marty Cummings improperly viewed the CRCT before it was administered and provided struggling students with the questions and answers so that they could pass the test. After the tests were administered in the afternoon and the SRT monitor left the building, Copeland took the tests out of the vault and to her office where she changed answers from wrong to right.

B. Narrative

Benteen teachers returned CRCT materials, counted them in front of either Patricia Whitehead or Dr. Marty Cummings, and put them in a plastic bin. Whitehead and Cummings took the bins to the vault, where they were “secured” by Copeland and the SRT monitor. The next morning, Whitehead and Cummings would get the tests from the vault and take them to the classrooms. Five teachers testified that they put the tests in a particular order, but when they got them back the next morning, the tests were out of order or altered. Cummings explains this by saying that he counted the tests again when he got them back to the vault. This might explain why the tests would be out of order except that Whitehead and Copeland testified that they were not counted again.

Five people saw Copeland take the tests from the vault to her office in the afternoon. One person saw the tests in her office spread out on a table. Cummings, who helped administer the tests, testified there was no reason for the tests to come out of the vault in the afternoon.

Nine teachers did not believe the high CRCT scores reflected the actual abilities of their students.

Principal Quisenberry, Copeland, and Cummings took students who had been identified as likely to fail the CRCT out of class for “tutorial sessions.” Students who were tutored later told their teachers that they had seen all of the CRCT questions in these sessions.

C. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Patricia Whitehead (Coach)

Patricia Whitehead assisted Testing Coordinator Theresia Copeland with the administration of the CRCT in 2009. The classroom teachers collected the tests, counted them out in front of Whitehead (or Dr. Marty Cummings), and placed the tests in a clear plastic box. Whitehead watched the teachers count the tests and then wheeled the boxes on a cart to the “vault” where they were stored until the next morning. In the morning, Whitehead returned the boxes to the teachers who counted them again and administered the test. Whitehead never took the tests out of the boxes or counted them. Only the teachers counted the tests. According to Whitehead, there was no need to touch the tests between pickup and delivery.

At approximately 3:30 p.m. during the week of the CRCT, Whitehead was in the cafeteria with Naja Brittain, Lucrelia Craig, and Jamesa Rhodes. They saw Copeland pushing the tests on a cart down the hallway from the vault to her office. On another occasion that week, Whitehead saw Copeland lock the tests in the vault in the presence of Cecil Jackson, the APS monitor. Later that day, again around 3:30 p.m., Whitehead saw Copeland taking the tests toward her office.

On another occasion, Whitehead went to Copeland’s office and saw the test booklets and answer sheets out on a table.

Some teachers put their students’ tests in a particular order at the end of testing each day. Two teachers, Sheila Evans and Lori Revere-Paulk, complained to Whitehead that their tests were out of order when they got them back in the morning. Whitehead could not explain why the tests would have been in a different order.

Whitehead heard students who were tutored by Dr. Marty Cummings say that they had seen the test questions prior to the CRCT.

2. Naja Brittain (Monitor)

Naja Brittain saw Copeland pushing the tests on a cart toward her office in the afternoon during the testing week.

3. Lucrelia Craig (Cafeteria)

Lucrelia Craig also saw Copeland pushing the tests on a cart toward her office in the afternoon during the testing week.

4. Jamesa Rhodes (Teacher)

A student told Jamesa Rhodes that she had already seen the questions on the CRCT. All of her students passed the CRCT, including one student who could not read the word “cat.” According to the GOSA erasure analysis, that student had 14 WTR erasures out of 17 total erasures on the reading section of her 2009 CRCT.

At 6:30 a.m., Rhodes saw Copeland come out of the main office with the tests on a cart.

Principal Quisenberry made Rhodes change a student’s report card grade from a D to a C.

In the years before Principal Quisenberry became principal of Benteen, many students failed the reading portion of the CRCT. The reading scores went up dramatically in 2007-2008. In that year, only one student failed.

5. Javacia Jones (Paraprofessional)

In 2009, Javacia Jones proctored Lori Revere-Paulk’s fifth grade class. Revere-Paulk always put the tests in alphabetical order at the end of the testing day. She also always put the instructional booklet on top of the stack of tests. On two occasions the tests came back out of order and the instructional booklet was missing. Revere-Paulk complained to Copeland who said not to worry about it.

Jones saw Theresia Copeland with the tests in her office in the morning.

Principal Quisenberry kept a list of who had been interviewed by the GBI, and for how long.

6. Nicole Taylor (Teacher)

Nicole Taylor administered the CRCT to her first class in 2009. On the second testing day her students’ test booklets had their names written on the inside. The names had not been there the day before.

In 2009, at approximately 3:00 p.m., she saw Copeland take the tests from the vault to her office. Taylor knew something was going on because she thought there was a disconnect between CRCT scores and actual abilities.

Some Benteen students told Leslie Bonds that they had seen the CRCT questions before. Bonds covered her ears.

7. Shawn Vactor (Teacher)

Shawn Vactor taught fifth grade in 2009. His students told him that the actual test questions were just like the questions in their tutoring sessions. Vactor asked them, “Did y’all have the answers,” and a student replied, “I told you that.”

Vactor put the tests each day in a certain order. When they were returned to him the next day they were out of order. Some pages of the test booklets were folded back and opened.

8. Terrell Emerson (Teacher)

Terrell Emerson started at Benteen in the fall of 2009. He heard teachers talk about how the administrators, Principal Quisenberry, Theresia Copeland, Dr. Marty Cummings, and Towanda Harris, altered tests.

Emerson claimed Principal Quisenberry has been falsifying attendance records. One of his students was absent over one hundred days, but when Emerson got the attendance report back from the main office it showed only three or four absences. Emerson complained about the discrepancy to Principal Quisenberry who said there must have been a 'glitch' in the system. After he reported the attendance issues to Principal Quisenberry, she started sending observers to watch him teach. Shortly thereafter he was placed on a PDP. Emerson said that Principal Quisenberry took similar retaliatory actions against Ryan Abbott when Abbott reported that Sheila Evans gave her students the answers to the CRCT.

9. Ryan Abbott (Teacher)

Twelve students in Ryan Abbott's fourth grade class told him that their former teacher, third grade teacher Sheila Evans, gave them the answers to the CRCT. He called the APS hotline to report the cheating.

10. Joann Banks (Front Office)

A student told Joann Banks that her teacher, Toni Travis, gave her answers to the CRCT.

11. Bethanie Barnes (Teacher)

Bethanie Barnes turned in report cards with D and F grades. Principal Quisenberry and Theresia Copeland told her that grades below a C were against school policy. They sent the report cards back to Barnes and told her to change the students' grades.

12. Leslie Bonds (Teacher)

Students told Leslie Bonds they had seen the CRCT in their tutorial sessions.

13. Alexis Dimes-Smith (Teacher)

Alexis Dimes-Smith put the tests in a certain order when she turned them in at the end of each day. Two out of five days of testing, the tests were returned to her in a different order.

14. Veronica Kirk (Teacher)

Veronica Kirk administered the test to her first grade class in 2009. She put the tests in a certain order when she turned them in and every day they were out of order when she got them back.

Some results surprised her. For example, one of her students left an entire section blank yet passed the CRCT.

Copeland told Kirk during the week of the tests that her students did well. She would have only known if she had been looking at the tests.

15. The following people testified that there were one or more students in their class whose passing scores surprised them

Patricia Whitehead (literacy coach) (she taught reading to students who could not read at their grade level); Sheila Evans (third grade teacher who had a number of students who had difficulty reading and passed the CRCT); Kimberlyn Gaston (paraprofessional who knows of fifth graders who cannot read yet met expectations on the CRCT); Towanda Harris (School Improvement Specialist who testified that students cannot pass their grade level assessment tests but passed the CRCT); Clinton Smith (third grade teacher who identified one student who surprised him that she passed the CRCT; this student had 10 WTR erasures out of 10 total erasures on the reading portion of the CRCT); Anne Elizabeth Martin (first grade teacher who identified one student she was surprised to learn passed the CRCT; this student had 17 WTR erasures out of 20 total erasures on the language arts section and 26 WTR erasures out of 32 total erasures on the reading section); and Javacia Jones (paraprofessional who knows of many children who cannot read and passed the CRCT).

D. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Dr. Diana Quisenberry (Principal)

Principal Quisenberry denied cheating and claims she is not aware of anyone changing test answers. She denied changing attendance records or causing anyone else to alter them. She does not have a school policy that children cannot make less than a C, and has never suggested that grades change from a D or F to a C.

Principal Quisenberry saw teachers bring the tests to Copeland's office to count and sort. On one occasion she knocked on Copeland's door and Copeland said she could not come in because the tests were in there. Principal Quisenberry saw the tests stacked on a table through a window. Quisenberry said that this observation was prior to the administration of the test and that Copeland needed to sort the tests into boxes for the teachers.

Principal Quisenberry thinks that this investigation is politically motivated and pointed out that the schools under investigation are predominantly African-American schools.

2. Theresa Copeland (Testing Coordinator)

Theresa Copeland denied cheating on the CRCT.

Copeland worked with Principal Quisenberry in two other schools and they are close friends.

According to Copeland, the teachers counted the tests, not the test administrators.

3. Dr. Marty Cummings (Math Coach)

Dr. Cummings assisted in the administration of the 2009 CRCT. He picked up the tests, counted them in front of teachers, and then re-counted them before putting them in the vault.

He testified there would be no reason to take the tests out of the vault in the afternoon after they had been secured.

4. Sheila Evans (Teacher)

Sheila Evans denied giving her students any test answers in 2008. She heard that people were erasing answers at Benteen for years prior to 2009. She said that students identified as not likely to meet expectations were pulled out of class for tutorials in the weeks prior to the CRCT. They were tutored by Principal Quisenberry, Theresia Copeland, or Dr. Cummings.

Principal Quisenberry tells teachers the lowest grade they may give students is a C. Evans no longer works for APS. We have learned that she has sued APS.

E. Other Evidence

A teacher at Benteen reported cheating in May of 2009. The allegations were that Copeland and Dr. Cummings pulled students from the classroom in the weeks before the CRCT and gave them the questions and answers directly from the CRCT book. The complaint also alleged that there were children who scored very high on the test even when they slept through the CRCT or did not know the answers to most of the questions. APS hired Penn Payne to investigate. Teachers at Benteen told Payne much of the same information they gave us. Payne concluded that because she obtained a large amount of “inconsistent, contradictory, and uncorroborated information,” she was reluctant to reach conclusions about whether there was cheating. Instead, she recommended that the testing and achievement experts hired by APS examine Benteen in their analysis.

On September 17, 2010, after we began our investigation, Payne amended her report on Benteen. She concluded that Sheila Evans cheated and that it was possible Copeland, Cummings and Principal Quisenberry cheated.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

We conclude that Testing Coordinator Theresia Copeland changed answers on the 2009 CRCT. After the tests were administered in the afternoon, and the SRT monitor left the building, Copeland would take the tests out of the vault and to her office where she changed answers from wrong to right. This explains the tests being out of order each day, and why the students scored better on the CRCT than was reflected by their abilities in the classroom. We conclude that Principal Quisenberry knew Copeland was changing answers.

We also conclude that Principal Diana Quisenberry, Theresia Copeland, and Dr. Marty Cummings viewed the CRCT early and “tutored” students by reviewing the actual test.

Principal Diana Quisenberry failed in her responsibility for testing activities and for ensuring the ethical administration of and proper security for the 2009 CRCT. It is our conclusion from the statistical data and the other evidence that Dr. Quisenberry failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT, and adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and she is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

Finally, we find that Principal Quisenberry ordered her teachers to improperly give all students a C or above and falsified attendance records.

BEECHER HILLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

2257 Bollingbrook Drive
Atlanta, Georgia 30311

Principal: Dr. Robin Hall
Testing Coordinator: Crystal Jones

SRT-3 Executive Director: Dr. Gloria Patterson

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Beecher Hills Elementary in 2009 and in other years. Forty-two people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Three teachers confessed to cheating. Cheating at Beecher Hills is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms, confessions, and witness testimony. Principal Robin Hall failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

A. 2009 vs. 2010

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	42.6	2.4
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	23	1
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	10(7)	1(0)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	8.1	3.4
High Flagged Standard Deviation	19.2	3.4
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.0	3.4

B. Flagged Classrooms

Teacher	Grade & Test	Standard Deviation
MEADOWS	1 RD	7.425756593
MEADOWS	1 LA	9.185159218
MEADOWS	1 MA	5.360238788
DAVIS	2 MA	3.325295443
FOWLER	2 RD	6.925389177
FOWLER	2 LA	6.939522682
FOWLER	2 MA	7.654532653
LONG	2 RD	14.44128005
LONG	2 LA	12.54966787
LONG	2 MA	12.62085791
LITTLE	3 RD	7.586797809
LITTLE	3 LA	4.508882848
LITTLE	3 MA	5.789043049
ROSS	3 RD	3.300656702
ROSS	3 LA	3.032519074
ROSS	3 MA	8.870670614
UPSHAW	3 RD	11.95338131
UPSHAW	3 LA	8.873571835
UPSHAW	3 MA	3.700818309
AKINS	4 MA	3.684144795
HUMPHRIES	4 MA	4.874674245
VARNADO	5 RD	19.19833328
VARNADO	5 LA	14.61152034

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

There are several facts which point to a conclusion that Beecher Hills Elementary School was not managed to ensure that the 2009 CRCT results were accurately reported.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 42.6% for the 2009 CRCT. There were only 14 schools in APS with a higher percentage in 2009.

Second, with state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped from 42.6% to 2.1%.

Third, of the 23 flagged classrooms at Beecher Hills, 15 (70% of the total) had standard deviations that exceeded five, and six classrooms exceeded ten standard deviations. At five standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard deviations the probability is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations from the state mean were, for a number of classrooms, a further indication of cheating on a broad scale at Beecher Hills Elementary School.

Fourth is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures, 51% were produced by the flagged classrooms which account for only 27.8% of the total classrooms in the school.

Fifth, testing procedures were not clearly understood by the teachers. Teachers were allowed to read passages aloud to first and second grade students during the reading portion of the 2009 CRCT. Latenza Lawrence testified that she was instructed by Reading Coach Joye Bradley to read passages aloud to her second grade students. The practice ended after the erasure analysis was published.

Sixth, testing security was poor at Beecher Hills. The CRCT materials were stored in the testing coordinator's office and people came in and out throughout the day during testing. Catherine Mack witnessed Brandon McClendon, a paraprofessional, in the science resource room with a stack of CRCT answer sheets and a pencil "taking care of stray marks."

Finally, three teachers, Florence Bankston, Michelle Ross, and Dana Little, admitted to cheating during the 2009 CRCT. Michelle Ross purposefully seated her students such that the higher achieving students sat next to lower achieving students during the 2009 CRCT so that the lower achieving students could copy the work of the higher achieving students. She also allowed her students to use extra time to copy one another's answers.

A. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Latenza Lawrence (Teacher)

Latenza Lawrence testified that in 2006, Joye Bradley entered her room during the administration of the reading portion of the CRCT and instructed her to read the passages of the reading section aloud to her students. Lawrence believed that was improper.

2. Catherine Mack (Teacher)

Catherine Mack believes cheating occurred at Beecher Hills on the 2009 CRCT, and in other years. She heard that teachers prompted their students during the administration of the CRCT. She testified that classroom doors were closed during the 2009 CRCT, and windows were covered. She believes that most teachers looked ahead to the next day's section of the CRCT test booklet. Teachers always met after each testing day to discuss what was going to be tested in the next session.

She saw Paraprofessional Brandon McClendon in a room with a stack of CRCT answer sheets and a pencil in 2009. She asked him what he was doing, and he responded "taking care of stray marks." She recalled many of her students told her in 2009, and in years past that their former teachers gave them answers during the CRCT.

During the reading portion of the CRCT at Beecher Hills, the first grade teachers were permitted to read the passages aloud to students. Once the news of the cheating investigation broke, however, the first grade teachers were no longer permitted to read the passages aloud.

B. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Florence Bankston (Proctor)

Florence Bankston administered the 2009 CRCT to PEC children in the media center. She admitted to prompting students to change answers on the 2009 CRCT.

2. Michelle Ross (Teacher)

Michelle Ross admitted to seating higher achieving students next to lower achieving students in 2009 and other years so that the students could cheat. Ross admits that she sat her students in that particular order specifically to allow her students to cheat. She also admits that once her students finished the CRCT she allowed them to use the extra time to copy each other's work.

Ross also admits to prompting her students to change incorrect answers during the administration of the 2009 CRCT, and in other years.

3. Dana Little (Teacher)

Dana Little admits to prompting her students to re-read particular questions when she noticed a student answered a particular question incorrectly. She further testified that she was currently on a PDP for low test scores in 2010.

4. Crystal Jones (Testing Coordinator)

Crystal Jones became principal of Beecher Hills in 2009 after Principal Hall was promoted to SRT-3 Executive Director. Crystal Jones was the Testing Coordinator during the 2009 CRCT at Beecher Hills. She testified that she knew of no testing irregularities or cheating.

Because she was a kindergarten teacher before becoming ILS and then principal, Crystal Jones has never administered the CRCT.

Crystal Jones testified that she is currently on a PDP for low CRCT scores on the 2010 CRCT.

5. *Robin Hall (Principal)*

Robin Hall denied any knowledge of cheating on the CRCT in 2009 or in any other year.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

We conclude that Florence Bankston, Michelle Ross, and Dana Little cheated on the CRCT in 2009 and in other years.

Based on the statistical evidence and what we have found at schools with similar statistical data, we believe that other flagged teachers also cheated. We lack sufficient evidence to determine which additional teachers cheated.

It is also our conclusion, from the statistical data and the other evidence secured in this investigation, that Principal Robin Hall failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT, and adequately supervise the testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and she is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

FAIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

101 Hemphill School Road NW
Atlanta, GA 30331-1621

Principal: Dr. Marcus Stallworth
Testing Coordinator: Pamela Ringer

SRT-1 Executive Director: Dr. Sharon Davis-Williams

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Fain Elementary in 2009 and in previous years. Twenty-nine people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Two teachers confessed to cheating. Teachers and administrators erased and changed answers on the CRCT. Cheating at Fain is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms, confessions and witness testimony. Principal Marcus Stallworth directed teachers to cheat on the CRCT by telling them to use voice inflection, point to answers, prompt students to erase and change answers, re-word questions, or by any other means necessary. Testing Coordinator Pamela Ringer also encouraged teachers to cheat using these methods.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

A. 2009 vs. 2010

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	39.7	18.8
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	31	13
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	17(9)	8(4)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	9.68	4.1
High Flagged Standard	30.6	5.5
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.1	3.02

B. Flagged Classrooms

Teacher	Grade & Test	Standard Deviation
CARWISE	1 RD	3.705585441
CARWISE	1 LA	6.088895616
CARWISE	1 MA	4.610629223
MCALPIN	1 RD	7.805389288
MCALPIN	1 LA	9.562743096
MCALPIN	1 MA	6.101663918
HOLMES	1 MA	3.590645178
LUCKIE	1 LA	4.856240058
LUCKIE	1 MA	4.078116832
DICKEY	1 LA	5.640940021
SALES	2 RD	16.70813386
SALES	2 LA	20.81894726
SALES	2 MA	22.77842843
SIMON	2 MA	4.231286213
TIMMON	2 LA	3.186094992
RICKS	2 LA	3.790038236
WITMER	3 RD	27.26168023
WITMER	3 LA	25.68539899
WITMER	3 MA	30.65179877
STEVENS	3 RD	9.732968355
STEVENS	3 LA	16.28511265
STEVENS	3 MA	14.61380638
JOHNSON	4 RD	3.862024884
JOHNSON	4 MA	4.577041882
FRANCIS	4 RD	3.565992132
HOWARD	4 LA	7.687164629
BUTLER	4 RD	4.750123138
BROWN	5 RD	4.819573861
BROWN	5 LA	5.929359881
FORDHAM	5 RD	7.120942884
FORDHAM	5 LA	6.609480502

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Overview

There are several facts which point to the conclusion that Fain Elementary School was not managed to ensure that the 2009 CRCT results were accurately reported to the Georgia Department of Education.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 39.7% for the 2009 CRCT.

Second, of the approximately 1,800 non-APS schools in the state taking the 2009 CRCT, only ten schools had a higher percentage of flagged classrooms than Fain Elementary School.

Third, with state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped significantly from 39.7% to 18.8%.

Fourth, of the 31 flagged classrooms at Fain Elementary School, 18 (58% of the total) had standard deviations that exceeded five, and eight classrooms exceeded ten standard deviations. At five standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard deviations the probability is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations

from the state mean were, for a number of classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at Fain Elementary School.

Fifth is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures at Fain, 72.4% were produced by the flagged classrooms which account for only 39.7% of the total classrooms in the school.

Last, multiple teachers confessed to cheating and testified that Principal Stallworth directed the cheating at this school.

B. Narrative

Witnesses at Fain testified that Principal Stallworth and Testing Coordinator Ringer instructed teachers to assist students on the CRCT by using voice inflection, pointing out answers, using non-verbal communication to indicate when a student marked a wrong answer, rewording questions, and any other means necessary. Many teachers followed Principal Stallworth and Ringer's directives and cheated on the test.

In addition, Principal Stallworth and Ringer either participated in erasing and changing student answers or they failed to enforce proper testing protocols, giving teachers the opportunity to erase and change student answers. One teacher testified that she saw Stallworth and Ringer "looking over test documents" and that both were together at the school on weekends while the tests were in the school.

Teachers cheated in many instances because of pressure from Stallworth to meet targets. Principal Stallworth constantly and routinely threatened teachers with job loss or negative evaluations if they failed to improve scores. Principal Stallworth embarrassed teachers that had low-performing students.

C. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Geneva McCall (SST)

Principal Stallworth pressured teachers to make sure students passed the CRCT. Stallworth used PDPs to keep teachers from transferring out of Fain.

2. Tasha Marks (Teacher)

APS administrators generally, and Principal Stallworth and Pamela Ringer specifically, put a great deal of pressure on teachers to meet targets. Stallworth told teachers during a faculty meeting that if their students' test scores were low on the CRCT, he would change the teachers' evaluations that had previously been completed.

In 2009, Marks taught reading at Fain. No more than 30% of her students could have passed based on how they performed prior to the test. She felt the reading scores on the CRCT did not accurately reflect the students' actual academic performance. Marks made it clear that she would not cheat, and feels Stallworth retaliated against her because she would not go along with the cheating culture.

3. Melvina Holmes (Teacher)

Principal Stallworth made it abundantly clear that teachers needed to do what they needed to do to make sure that the requisite number of students met or exceeded standards on the CRCT. He openly encouraged teachers to use voice inflection. He demonstrated how to prompt students using his eyes and eyeglasses. Melvina Holmes believes that Testing Coordinator Pamela Ringer was present during faculty meetings when Principal Stallworth gave these instructions.

Cedric Carwise told Ms. Holmes how Principal Stallworth had demonstrated to him how to use voice inflection and then told him, “that’s how you do it.”

It was important to the administrators that Fain “made the floor” at the Convocation. During teachers’ pre-evaluation conferences, Principal Stallworth informed teachers that if they did not meet targets, he would add it to their evaluation and place them on a PDP.

4. Darius Dowdell (Former Fain Teacher)

Darius Dowdell taught at Fain from 1997 to 2008. Principal Stallworth pressured teachers and students to improve scores on the CRCT. Principal Stallworth singled out teachers in meetings and announced their CRCT scores. If the scores were low, Principal Stallworth ordered the teacher to crawl under the table in front of all the other faculty. He routinely made statements like: “It’s my school and I will run it how I want. If you don’t like it, leave.”

Dowdell had no direct knowledge of cheating, but recalled that one year one of his students refused to take the test. That student still achieved a passing score on the CRCT.

5. Marsha Howard-Holliday (Teacher)

Marsha Howard-Holliday taught at Fain from 2006 to 2010. One year during the CRCT, she saw Pamela Ringer and Principal Stallworth looking at the tests in a way that made her suspicious. Ringer and Principal Stallworth were at the school on weekends during the testing period and had access to the tests.

Holliday suspects cheating at Fain. She became suspicious after Fain “made the floor” several years in a row. Some children at Fain could not function at the level the testing indicated, yet the school continued to make targets. In one particular year, one of Holliday’s students did not finish the math portion of the CRCT, but still achieved a passing score.

It was extremely important to Principal Stallworth to “make the floor.” Principal Stallworth told teachers they need to “do whatever it takes.”

Holliday denied erasing anything on her students’ test, giving students answers, or using voice inflection to prompt students on the CRCT.

6. Yolanda McQueen (Teacher)

Principal Stallworth told the teachers that they should “use whatever means necessary” to ensure students passed the CRCT.

7. Douglas Rozier (Teacher)

Douglas Rozier taught at Fain for fifteen years. When Stallworth was principal, Principal Stallworth told teachers during faculty or grade-level meetings to use voice inflection to assist the students on the CRCT. He instructed teachers to “make it work” and that when monitoring the room, teachers should direct students to the correct answers. Principal Stallworth also said teachers should give students additional time on the test. Principal Stallworth pressured teachers to follow his instructions by making statements such as: “This is my school and if you don’t abide by my rules, I will ship you out.”

Testing Coordinator Pamela Ringer followed Principal Stallworth’s instructions to cheat. She encouraged voice inflection and advised teachers to put the test questions in the “simplest form” while administering the test.

D. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Sabrina Luckie (Teacher)

Sabrina Luckie admitted to prompting students on the CRCT. Principal Stallworth instructed Sabrina Luckie and other teachers that while administering the CRCT, they needed to use voice inflection to assist the students. Luckie denied using voice inflection, but admitted that she would improperly give her students “the look” if she noticed they missed certain answers. She also pointed to a question if the student had it wrong so that the student would look at it again. Luckie attributed the high erasures in her class to these types of prompts. Luckie believed that other teachers similarly assisted their students. One former teacher at Fain, Ms. Moore, had a class that struggled academically but all her students exceeded on the CRCT.

2. Cedric Carwise (Teacher)

Cedric Carwise admitted to improperly rewording questions so his students could better understand them. Principal Stallworth drilled the teachers at Fain with APS targets, especially grades three through five. He told Carwise not to forget the “power of the voice.” Stallworth then demonstrated to Carwise how to use voice inflection. Stallworth often told teachers that they needed to use “any means necessary” to ensure the students passed the CRCT.

3. Marcus Stallworth (Principal)

Marcus Stallworth served as Principal at Fain until December 2010. He denied cheating on the CRCT or encouraging teachers to cheat. He never suggested that teachers use voice inflection during a test and never told them to reword questions. Once, in a faculty meeting, he demonstrated the use of voice inflection on a test as an example of a tactic that teachers should not use. He claimed that some of the teachers may have misinterpreted that suggestion.

He denied telling teachers to “do what they needed to do” to make sure students pass the test. Rather, he said he told his teachers to “do what they needed to do to make sure students were ready to sit down and take the test.”

Stallworth confirmed that he told teachers that their evaluations could be changed based on their students’ CRCT scores. APS administrators instructed principals to convey that message to their teachers. He never changed any teacher’s evaluation as a result of test scores.

In December 2010, APS terminated Stallworth claiming he screamed at teachers and demeaned them. He believes that his termination was in retaliation for statements he made in an interview in the spring of 2009 as part of an investigation into cheating. Stallworth explained that during that interview he said that some APS schools made huge jumps in test scores and that he understood why APS had come under suspicion. Stallworth suspects that some cheating was going on in APS due to large jumps in test scores in such a short period of time.

In the fall of 2009, SRT-1 Executive Director Dr. Sharon Davis-Williams held a conference call with all the principals in SRT 1. She instructed her principals to collect everything they had regarding the CRCT, including e-mails, teacher materials, testing motivation, and training packets. Stallworth sent those items to her in a three-ring binder. It appeared that Davis-Williams was in a hurry to get the material. During that same teleconference, Dr. Davis-Williams told the SRT-1 principals they were not to use their email or the telephone to send out anything related to the CRCT. Stallworth commented to his ILS that, “if APS did nothing wrong, they were certainly making it appear as if they had.”

APS put pressure on principals to meet targets. During principals’ meetings, and in the annual meeting with Dr. Hall, the administrators told principals that their evaluations were tied to targets. Dr. Hall would go around the room and almost force principals to say they would meet 90% of their targets.

The APS system is hostile from the top to the bottom. “If you are not a puppet, you get gone.” The “puppeteering comes from the top.”

4. Pamela Ringer (Testing Coordinator)

Pamela Ringer denied knowledge of, or participation in, cheating. She denied ever hearing Principal Stallworth tell teachers to use voice inflection or prompt students in any way on the CRCT.

E. Other Evidence

- Fain met AYP in the 2006-2007, 2007-2008, and 2008-2009 school years.
- In 2009-2010, Fain did not meet AYP criteria for academic performance.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

We conclude that Principal Stallworth and Testing Coordinator Pamela Ringer directed and facilitated cheating on the CRCT in 2009 and other years. Stallworth and Ringer deny any

knowledge of cheating, but numerous teachers testified that Stallworth and Ringer instructed them to assist students during the administration of the CRCT by using voice inflection, prompting, giving answers, allowing students additional time and changing answers to improve student scores. Many teachers admitted that they followed their leaders' directives to cheat due to intimidation, fear of job loss or negative evaluations.

Sabrina Luckie and Cedric Carwise admit that they followed Principal Stallworth's instructions to cheat.

Although no one confessed to erasing and changing answers, the statistical improbability of even the lowest standard deviations at Fain, as well as a review of the student test data, points to adults erasing and changing answers. One witness observed Principal Stallworth and Testing Coordinator Ringer looking over the tests. This same witness stated that these administrators were frequently at the school together.

Principal Marcus Stallworth failed in his ultimate responsibility for testing activities and for ensuring the ethical administration of, and proper security for the 2009 CRCT. It is our conclusion, from the statistical data and the other evidence secured in this investigation that Principal Stallworth failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT, and adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and he is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

SLATER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

1320 Pryor Road
Atlanta, Georgia 30315

Principal: Dr. Selena Dukes-Walton
Testing Coordinator: Vanessa Jackson

SRT-2 Executive Director: Michael Pitts

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Slater Elementary in 2009. Twenty-seven people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Two teachers confessed to cheating. Cheating at Slater is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms, confessions and witness testimony. Testing Coordinator Vanessa Jackson and Principal Selena Dukes-Walton knew about cheating. Principal Dukes-Walton failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

A. 2009 vs. 2010

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	30.3	5.2
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	30	5
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	15(10)	4(1)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	10	3.4
High Flagged Standard Deviation	31.8	3.7
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3	3

B. Flagged Classrooms

Teacher	Grade & Test	Standard Deviation
GRESHAM	1 LA	3.364767019
LYNUM	1 RD	3.036639216
LYNUM	1 MA	3.074088147
WALKER	1 RD	5.609065799
WALKER	1 LA	13.37276937
WALKER	1 MA	19.84048361
GRAHAM	2 RD	15.76058602
GRAHAM	2 LA	16.91452997
GRAHAM	2 MA	16.59604769
NOLAN	2 RD	7.388164275
NOLAN	2 LA	5.165466638
NOLAN	2 MA	8.327930008
ST ARRE	2 MA	7.002698269
UNUNAKWE	2 LA	6.016216606
UNUNAKWE	2 MA	8.565931576
AUSMORE	3 LA	3.351043196
AUSMORE	3 MA	3.702572445
COLEMAN	3 RD	5.038191689
TAYLOR	3 RD	15.16808995
TAYLOR	3 LA	6.073024418
TAYLOR	3 MA	4.317325691
WINSTON	3 RD	20.02061696
WINSTON	3 LA	3.114788407
BLACKMON	4 RD	4.354670541
BLACKMON	4 LA	4.321901605
GRANT	4 RD	11.86774071
GRANT	4 LA	18.72779953
GRANT	4 MA	23.89018266
HICKS	4 RD	31.79652758
JONES	5 RD	3.564907392

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Narrative

Teachers Ellen Grant and Nettie Walker gave students the answers during the 2009 CRCT. Grant allowed her students to go home and look up answers and then change the previous day's answers. She also erased and changed answers on her students' tests. Nettie Walker gave students the answers during the test and changed answers in the media center while "erasing stray marks."

Testing Coordinator Vanessa Jackson saw Ellen Grant changing answers and did not tell her to stop. Principal Dukes-Walton created an environment that pressured teachers to cheat, and she knew they were cheating.

B. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Katrina Coleman (Teacher)

Katrina Coleman heard that Principal Dukes-Walton asked Math Coach Shenita Monroe to cheat on the 2009 CRCT. Coleman also heard that Gwendolyn Taylor's husband saw Principal Dukes-Walton's car at Slater on the weekend between the first and second week of the CRCT when the tests were located at the school.

Principal Dukes-Walton was focused on CRCT results. At a faculty meeting she used a power point presentation to list every teacher and their students' test scores. Coleman felt this was done to embarrass teachers with lower test scores. Each year, Principal Dukes-Walton prepared a document that informed the teachers how many students needed to meet or exceed expectations on the CRCT. They would go over this information in January, and a copy of the memorandum would be placed in the testing materials in April. A copy of the Memorandum included as **Attachment A**.

Coleman's students tried to tell her that teachers gave them the answers in previous years but Coleman would not let them explain because she did not want to have to report cheating. She feared retaliation if she reported the students' allegations.

Coleman heard that Principal Dukes-Walton asked each teacher at Slater whether they had been subpoenaed for this investigation. Administrators constantly reminded teachers they should keep quiet and not cooperate with the investigation.

Coleman said she believes APS is like an "organized crime family" because APS has a way of making things disappear. For example, Coleman filed a grievance while at Slater and submitted it to SRT-2 Executive Director Michael Pitts. The grievance was about stolen money that Principal Dukes-Walton knew about but did not address. Coleman has never heard anything from APS about her grievance.

2. Schajuan Jones (Teacher)

At the end of the testing week teachers from each grade level were called to the media center to erase stray marks. Schajuan Jones saw Ellen Grant erasing an entire section on an answer sheet. Jones told Grant to stop cheating and then approached Testing Coordinator Vanessa Jackson to report this misconduct. Jackson did not take any action until Jones complained a second time, when Jackson finally told Grant to stop erasing answers. According to Jones, the other teachers in the room were laughing during this exchange. An SRT-2 representative, Maxine Coleman, was present for this incident, as were most of the fourth and fifth grade teachers. Jones specifically remembers that Janice Hicks and Jermaine Ausmore were present. Jones indicated that this "erasing of stray marks" as a group occurred all three years she taught at Slater.

During the 2009 CRCT, Jones saw Shenita Monroe walking from the direction of the school's main office making comments about not doing something. Jones asked Monroe what she was talking about. Monroe said she was talking about changing answers on the CRCT. Monroe also mentioned Principal Dukes-Walton's name, but did not specifically say that the principal asked her to change answers. However, Jones believes that Principal Dukes-Walton asked Monroe to change answers on the CRCT.

3. Shenita Monroe (Teacher)

Shenita Monroe denied the incident reported by Schajuan Jones. Monroe says that Principal Dukes-Walton never asked her to cheat. However, Dukes-Walton did put Monroe on a PDP for low test scores. The PDP did not explicitly state that low test scores were the reason for the PDP, but Dukes-Walton told Monroe that was the reason for the PDP.

4. Ellen Grant (Teacher)

Ellen Grant admitted to cheating on the 2009 CRCT. She encouraged students to go home and look up the answers to the CRCT questions. The next day she allowed the students to go back to previous sections and change their answers. Grant also changed answers herself while her proctor took the students to the restroom. She changed answers for the “middle performers.”

Grant denied changing answers in the media center with other teachers. She claimed she could not have changed answers then because she did not have the test booklets. Grant emphasized several times she was alone when she cheated and that she did not erase answers in front of anyone and that no one directed her to cheat.

5. Nettie Walker (Teacher)

Nettie Walker admitted to cheating on the CRCT. She gave her students the answers to CRCT questions in 2009 and in previous years. Walker walked around the classroom during the test and when she noticed that a majority of the class was getting a particular question wrong, she would give the whole class the answer. Walker thinks that she provided five to seven answers per section. She also admitted to changing one answer in 2009. One student had a “meltdown” during the test and while Walker was erasing stray marks in the media center she reviewed that student’s test. She saw one answer that she believed the student knew but had wrong, and she changed the student’s answer. When the teachers erased stray marks in the media center, they had both the test booklets and the answer sheets available.

C. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Dr. Selena Dukes-Walton (Principal)

Principal Dukes-Walton denied cheating or having knowledge of cheating. In her interviews, she pointed out that Slater did not make AYP in 2009. She was unable to offer an explanation for why the wrong-to-right erasures at her school were so high.

Principal Dukes-Walton observed the erasing of stray marks in the media center. She claimed that test booklets were not available while the teachers erased stray marks.

She denied asking any teacher whether the investigators subpoenaed them. She claimed that teachers told her when they had to be out of the school to meet with investigators because she had to arrange for someone to watch their class.

2. Vanessa Jackson (Testing Coordinator)

Vanessa Jackson called all of the teachers to the media center by grade level to erase stray marks. The teachers would check the tests of their own students and make sure the tests were clear of stray marks. No one erased answers and no one ever told her that anyone was erasing answers.

3. Wanda Harmon (Assistant Principal)

Wanda Harmon denied cheating or having knowledge of cheating.

4. Maxine Coleman (SRT-2 Proctor)

Maxine Coleman was assigned to Slater to observe the 2009 CRCT administration. Coleman denied seeing anyone erase answers.

5. Akisha Graham (Teacher)

Akisha Graham was not implicated by anyone but the wrong-to-right erasure analysis flagged three of her classes with standard deviations of 16, 17, and 17. When interviewed by a GBI agent, she smirked and said that the interview was a waste of her time.

6. Janice Hicks (Teacher)

Schajuan Jones testified that Hicks witnessed Jones complain about Grant changing answers in the media center. Hicks denied cheating; however, Hicks had the highest number of wrong-to-right erasures in the school. She was flagged in the reading subject area with a standard deviation of 31.9.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

There was cheating on the 2009 CRCT at Slater Elementary. Our conclusion is based on the following evidence: (1) Principal Dukes-Walton put pressure on teachers to raise CRCT scores; (2) teachers erased “stray marks” in the media center and Nettie Walker and Ellen Grant changed answers while “erasing stray marks”; (3) Ellen Grant let her students look up the answers and change tests themselves; and (4) Schajuan Jones reported Grant for changing answers and no action was taken. This evidence leads us to conclude that many teachers at Slater altered test documents.

Teachers changed answers in the media center while they claimed to be erasing stray marks. Ellen Grant admitted that she changed answers in her classroom. We believe Grant changed answers in the media center in the presence of Maxine Coleman, Vanessa Jackson, Janice Hicks, and Jermaine Ausmore. We conclude that Janice Hicks erased students’ answers, too, due to the statistical improbability of 31.8 standard deviations from the state norm, combined with the testimony of Schajuan Jones.

Testing Coordinator Vanessa Jackson knew the teachers were changing answers. The cheating occurred in the media center, when only four to six people were present. With such a small group in the media center at a time, Jackson would have noticed someone erasing answers.

We conclude that Principal Dukes-Walton knew or should have known there was cheating at this school. She created an environment in which teachers felt pressured by ridicule to ensure that their students’ scores improved. She also put memorandums in each teachers’ testing materials to inform them of how many students must meet or exceed expectations. As

one teacher stated, teachers could not ensure how students did on the test once the test started, unless they cheated.

It is our conclusion from the statistical data and the other evidence obtained in this investigation as to system wide cheating on the 2009 CRCT, that Principal Dukes-Walton failed to adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and she is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

MR. Coleman's Class Takes Ages 12 and Up

The table below shows the number of students from your class that **MUST EXCEED** standards on the 2009 - 2010 CRCT in Reading, English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Georgia 5th Grade Writing Assessment.

It also shows the number of students we can afford to have absent 10 or more days from your class.

It will take EVERYONE working TOGETHER, EVERYDAY to make the above headline a REALITY!!!

	Reading	English/ Language Arts	Mathematics	Science	Social Studies	Writing	Attendance
Grade Level	Does Not Meet	Exceed	Does Not Meet	Exceed	Does Not Meet	Exceed	Students Absent 10 Days or More
3 rd	4	5	4	4	5	5	5

Date:

Date: 1-12-10

Every grade & classroom has this chart specifically tailored to each home room.

Together **E**veryone **A**chieves **M**ore

10-0110-25-11

THOMASVILLE HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

1820 Henry Thomas Dr. SE
Atlanta, Georgia 30315

Principal: Janice Kelsey
Testing Coordinator: Tracey Fisher

SRT-2 Executive Director: Michael Pitts

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Thomasville Heights Elementary in 2008 and 2009. Thirty-two people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Two teachers confessed to cheating. Cheating at Thomasville Heights is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms, confessions and witness testimony. Principal Janice Kelsey failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT

II. STATISTICAL DATA

A. 2009 vs. 2010

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	39.1	7.2
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	34	5
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	15(11)	3(1)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	7.1	6.3
High Flagged Standard Deviation	14.6	9.6
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.1	3.2

B. Flagged Classrooms

Teacher	Grade & Test	Standard Deviation
BEAUFORT	1 RD	6.592096573
BEAUFORT	1 LA	12.56542713
BEAUFORT	1 MA	7.893137848
COHEN	1 RD	6.294592751
COHEN	1 LA	5.940398975
COHEN	1 MA	5.116794989
MCKEITHEN	1 MA	4.886755241
NICKOLICH	1 MA	3.285995043
OLIVER	1 LA	4.546905732
DALIDE	2 RD	5.285191345
DALIDE	2 LA	5.396477417
DALIDE	2 MA	4.29678822
SWAIN P	2 RD	8.79181171
SWAIN P	2 LA	10.23762982
SWAIN P	2 MA	6.088495889
WALLER	2 RD	5.856558037
WALLER	2 LA	7.920618241
WALLER	2 MA	9.078163504
HUBBARD	3 RD	9.676394581
HUBBARD	3 LA	6.743629425
HUBBARD	3 MA	4.751842097
BROWN	4 RD	3.111356934
SAVAGE	4 RD	10.38147811
SAVAGE	4 MA	10.73819265
BIDULESCU	5 RD	12.79621953
BIDULESCU	5 LA	14.64533258
BIDULESCU	5 MA	3.152159194
DAY	5 RD	4.320453585
DAY	5 MA	5.589028002
FORRER	5 RD	8.890145458
FORRER	5 LA	6.260625917
FORRER	5 MA	11.36464914
THOMASVILLE	5 LA	3.707339187
THOMASVILLE	5 MA	5.589336097

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Overview

There are several facts which point to the conclusion that Thomasville Heights Elementary School was not managed to ensure that the 2009 CRCT results were accurately reported.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 39.1% for the 2009 CRCT.

Second, of the approximately 1,800 non-APS schools in the state taking the 2009 CRCT, only 15 schools had a higher percentage of flagged classrooms than Thomasville Heights.

Third, with state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped significantly from 39.1% to 7.2%.

Fourth, of the 34 flagged classrooms at Thomasville Heights, 25 (74% of the total) had standard deviations that exceeded five, and seven classrooms exceeded ten standard deviations. At five standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult

intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard deviations the probability is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations from the state mean were, for a number of classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at Thomasville Heights.

Fifth is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures, 68% were produced by the flagged classrooms which account for only 39.1% of the total classrooms in the school.

Last, two teachers admitted to cheating. Two first grade teachers confessed to prompting their students in the classroom. One teacher walked around while testing and if several students missed a question, she might rephrase the question and prompt students to remember what they were taught in class. Another teacher admitted to reading the questions aloud more than twice and pointing to questions she noticed students got wrong and telling them to re-read it. These teachers believe that their actions caused their students to erase and change answers from wrong to right.

B. Narrative

Teachers who cheated, and others interviewed, cited the intense pressure they felt to increase test scores and make targets. Principal Janice Kelsey had been on several PDPs and felt pressure from her SRT Executive Director. Teachers were threatened with PDPs and job loss. Principal Kelsey and Testing Coordinator Tracey Fisher allowed teachers to pick up tests as early as 7:30 a.m. and keep them late. Stray marks could be erased by teachers in their classrooms or in the conference room. No one seemed clear on the proper policy.

APS was alerted to cheating on the 2009 CRCT based on events in 2008. Between March and May 2008, APS's Office of Internal Resolution received allegations of cheating and workplace improprieties involving Principal Janice Kelsey. The cheating allegations stemmed from an anonymous phone call in April 2008 to the Georgia Department of Education (DOE). The caller alleged that Principal Kelsey was putting extreme pressure on teachers to meet targets and threatening to place teachers not meeting targets on a PDP. The caller also alleged that Principal Kelsey told teachers that "hints" should be provided to students during CRCT testing. The cheating allegations were investigated by an external investigator, Stan Williams, who conducted interviews of staff at Thomasville Heights and submitted reports of his findings to OIR in May 2008.

The 2008 external investigation looked into other allegations of testing-related improprieties that had occurred at Thomasville Heights. One allegation was that Principal Kelsey went into teacher Emily Cohen's first grade classroom during testing and administered part of the test. Cohen was having difficulty controlling the students' behavior during the test. On the second day Principal Kelsey selected certain students from Cohen's class, and some from other classes, and tested them separately in Cohen's classroom. Principal Kelsey took over the reading of different test subjects, at times reading too quickly, or re-reading the questions more than two times. Cohen stated that Principal Kelsey also leaned over students and pointed to the test book, but was not sure she was pointing at answers.

There was a missing answer sheet on the second day of CRCT testing in 2008. Fourth grade teacher Giselle Brown had turned in 19 answer sheets on Friday, but on the next Monday, she received back only 18 answer sheets. Additionally, her tests booklets were in a different order from when she turned them in. The missing answer sheet was reported to Principal Kelsey, and Testing Coordinator Tracey Fisher. After an extensive search, the answer sheet could not be found and the matter was reported to Cari Ryan in APS Research, Planning and Accountability. Days later, the missing answer sheet was found by Giselle Brown under a bookcase in her classroom. She was unable to explain how that had occurred.

Principal Kelsey's car was seen at the school on Saturday of the weekend the answer sheet was missing in 2008. At least one witness mentioned that other teachers' cars had been seen that day along with Principal Kelsey's, including Raine Hackler, Stacey Brundage, and Makisha Boddie. Some witnesses questioned had difficulty recalling whether the sighting of Principal Kelsey's car happened during the 2008 or 2009 CRCT. The OIR report indicates that the alleged sighting was reported in 2008.

Williams' report found that all allegations of cheating and testing improprieties by Principal Kelsey "had no merit." In a separate report, Williams found "no evidence" that Kelsey threatened teachers to meet targets or be placed on PDPs, or that she instructed teachers to give hints or answers during CRCT testing. In a June 23, 2008 letter, Superintendent Beverly Hall informed Principal Kelsey that the investigations were complete and the allegations found to be unsubstantiated.

C. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Jennitra Oliver (Teacher)

Jennitra Oliver admitted that during testing she walked around and if several students missed a question she rephrased the question and told the students to remember what was taught in class. Oliver believes that accounted for the erasures in her class. She denied giving children the answers and denied erasing answers. She erased stray marks in her classroom and may have erased them in the conference room. Testing Coordinator Tracey Fisher was present in the conference room when stray marks were erased. Oliver could not recall if other teachers erased in the conference room. No one instructed her to erase stray marks in her classroom or the conference room. She erased the marks because she knew they were picked up by the scoring machine.

2. Theresa Nickolich (Teacher)

Theresa Nickolich admitted to prompting her students during testing by pointing to questions that she noticed were incorrect and telling the student to re-read the question. She read the question more than twice but denied telling students the answer. Nickolich recalled that teachers were instructed by Testing Coordinator Tracey Fisher to erase stray marks after testing each day. She cleaned the stray marks in her classroom, and could not recall whether teachers cleaned stray marks together in the conference room. She denies changing any answers.

Nickolich stated that there was pressure to raise scores from Principal Kelsey, who was being pressured herself. Everything in APS was driven by the test scores.

3. Giselle Brown (Teacher)

Giselle Brown was a fourth grade teacher in 2009. She recalls the incident of the missing answer sheet that was investigated in 2008. She said that the Friday after testing began she took her test booklets and answer sheets to the conference room as usual. She and the testing coordinator, Tracey Fisher, each counted 19 booklets and 19 answer sheets. Monday morning Brown went to the conference room to pick up her tests for the last day of test administration. There were 19 test booklets but only 18 answer sheets. Brown and Fisher searched everywhere but could not find it. Brown also noticed that her test booklets were out of order. She knew that when she turned them in on Friday they were in alphabetical order. Brown found the missing answer sheet days later under a bookcase. She felt that it had to have been placed there long after the answer sheet was noted as missing because it could not have fallen in that spot. Brown believed that someone went through her students answer sheets and changed answers from wrong to right.

Brown stated that there is tremendous pressure on teachers to meet targets. It was “all about the numbers.” Principal Kelsey was no longer at the school but Brown said the current principal was also focused on the numbers and ruled with a “heavy hand.” She believed, and it was obvious to her, there was cheating at Thomasville Heights. She had several fourth grade students who could barely read simple sentences and yet did well on the CRCT.

4. Makisha Boddie (Literacy Coach)

Makisha Boddie was the literacy coach in 2008 and left Thomasville Heights after the 2007-2008 school year. During the 2008 CRCT, Boddie was a hall monitor. Teachers were able to pick up their tests as early as they wanted. The testing coordinator, Tracey Fisher, would sign them out. Boddie recalled the incident of the answer sheet that went missing over the weekend of the 2008 testing. It was eventually found under a bookcase in Giselle Brown’s classroom and Boddie recalled that there was something peculiar about how it was found. Boddie discussed the matter with Principal Kelsey, who admitted that she was at the school over the weekend that the answer sheet went missing. Principal Kelsey stated that she went to school to clean her office.

The administrators placed a lot of pressure on teachers to score high on the CRCT. Teachers were threatened with PDPs if their test scores were low. She heard Principal Kelsey say “if I am going to be placed on a PDP for low test scores, then so will you.” SRT-2 Executive Director Michael Pitts told teachers that they would be fired if targets were not met. Boddie was surprised that some students passed the CRCT. As the literacy coach, she knew certain students whose ability did not match their high test scores.

5. Christopher Forrer (Teacher)

Christopher Forrer was a fifth grade teacher in 2009 and was flagged in all subjects for high wrong-to-right erasures. He was not surprised by the number of answers changed in his class and thought there was cheating at the school. Teachers were under so much pressure that they likely changed answers themselves. Forrer thought that administrators changed answers as well. He cited numerous testing violations and irregularities. For example, during the 2009 CRCT, his students told him on the third day of testing that their answers had been erased and

corrections made. Forrer looked at the answer sheets and noticed numerous answers had been changed. He thinks there was “funny business” going on with the tests and that someone changed answers from wrong to right. Teachers could pick up their tests as early as they wanted. Teachers could be alone with the test materials for as long as an hour before testing started, and could bring the tests back late “with no questions asked.” The lack of protocols was “deliberate.”

6. Deborah Clements (Teacher)

During the 2009 CRCT, one of her students raised her hand after testing had begun and informed Deborah Clements that two or three pages of her test book had the answers already marked in it. Clements reported it to Testing Coordinator Tracey Fisher. The student was given a new test book, and a few days later the incident was written up and also reported to APS by Clements and Fisher via speakerphone from Fisher’s office. (Fisher denied this incident ever occurred, or if it had, it was not during the CRCT.) Clements was interviewed again, at which time she confirmed that it was the CRCT.

Clements suspects someone changed answers on the CRCT. She had students from lower grades who scored well on the CRCT, but lacked basic skills and could not read.

Clements was reassigned to teach second grade. She believes this was a demotion for low test scores. There was tremendous pressure exerted to ensure students performed well on the CRCT. Principal Kelsey would come back from SRT meetings and “rake the teachers over the coals” for low test scores. Test scores were tied to evaluations.

D. Testimony of Additional Witnesses

1. Stacey Brundage (Teacher)

Stacey Brundage left Thomasville Heights in 2008 and was not present for the 2009 CRCT testing. She denies being at the school on the Saturday of 2009 CRCT testing as some had reported. She thinks Lisa Hubbard may have cheated because her scores were always higher than average.

2. Ashley Beaufort (Teacher)

Ashley Beaufort said that Principal Kelsey entered her class during 2009 CRCT testing, pointed to questions, and stood beside some of the students to get them to focus.

3. Susan Young (School Secretary)

Susan Young was the school secretary in 2009. The tests were kept in the vault where student records were kept. Only she and Principal Kelsey had the key to the vault. She knew that in 2008, an answer sheet went missing over a weekend and knew Principal Kelsey was there that weekend.

4. Lisa Hubbard (Teacher)

Lisa Hubbard was flagged for high wrong-to-right erasures in all subjects. She stated that she had been suspended on allegations she had struck a student. She did not plan on returning to work for APS. There was a lot of pressure to meet targets, especially from the SRT directors and other school administrators. She denied cheating.

5. Valerie Oliver (Teacher)

Valerie Oliver was a fourth grade teacher in 2008. During the 2008 CRCT, she picked up her students' test booklets on the Monday following the first week of testing and found that they were out of order. She told the testing coordinator, Tracey Fisher, who stated that it must have been a result of how Fisher had picked them up and handed them to Oliver.

E. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Janice Kelsey (Principal)

Janice Kelsey was principal of Thomasville Heights Elementary School in 2009 and retired after the 2008-2009 school year. She presently works part-time at a charter school run by former Thomasville Heights teacher Raine Hackler. Kelsey was placed on a PDP for her last two or three years by Michael Pitts for failure to meet targets and "other reasons." She and Pitts did not get along. They had different management philosophies and styles. Principal Kelsey inherited a number of disgruntled employees who wrote an anonymous letter to Pitts about her. Pitts came to the school and conducted a survey of the employees with regard to her leadership style. She believed there was pressure in the system but tried not to pass it on. She denied telling teachers she would put them on a PDP for low test scores. Teachers who said that about her "were lying."

Principal Kelsey recalled the OIR investigations in 2008 and the missing answer sheet. Giselle Brown found the missing answer sheet behind a shelf when she was cleaning her classroom at the end of the school year. Principal Kelsey believes that the answer sheet fell behind the shelf before Brown turned them in and that her instructional coaches, Stacey Brundage and Makisha Boddie, miscounted the tests.

Regarding her car being seen at the school over the 2008 CRCT weekend when the answer sheet was missing, Principal Kelsey recalled that she went to the school that Saturday, which she usually did not do during testing week. She had her grandsons with her but could not recall her reason for going to the school that weekend. She does not recall how long she was at the school, and denies that any staff members were present.

Principal Kelsey had no idea why people would suspect her of doing anything to the tests. She said if she was going to cheat she would have done it well enough to make targets. Principal Kelsey denied going to the school on the weekend of the CRCT in 2009. She did not remember going into Emily Cohen's class during the 2008 CRCT and denied re-reading questions to Cohen's students.

Principal Kelsey was surprised at the high number of flagged classes at Thomasville Heights. She had no explanation for the erasures and did not know of anyone who would have cheated.

2. Tracey Fisher (Testing Coordinator)

Tracey Fisher was the testing coordinator in 2009 and recalled having one OIR complaint filed against her, which resulted in a suspension. She gave the wrong tests to a class of PEC students, who were all supposed to have the same version. By the time she discovered they had the wrong version, students had begun marking on the answer sheets. Fisher erased the answer sheets and returned them to the teacher with new booklets. She stated she was not trying to cheat.

There was a lot of pressure on teachers to raise test scores. Former Principal Janice Kelsey and current Principal Charles Penn threatened to put teachers on PDPs for low test scores. She recalled the incident of the missing test answer sheet from Ms. Brown's class. Fisher said she counted the sheets and there were 19 sheets turned in on Friday but on Monday they only found 18. She recalled that Brown mentioned that her test booklets were out of order. Fisher suspects that Principal Kelsey took the answer sheets to change answers and forgot to put one back. She was told by Makisha Boddie that Principal Kelsey's car was at the school on the weekend that the answer sheet went missing.

Fisher does not recall an incident during the 2009 CRCT administration concerning a test booklet given to one of Deborah Clements' students that had answers already marked. She stated that if such an incident occurred, it happened with a different type of test where the booklets are reused, and not the CRCT. Fisher said stray marks were erased in a conference room. In a previous interview, Fisher denied that stray marks were erased. Teachers were allowed to pick up their tests as early as 7:30 a.m. for the CRCT. She was following the directive of Principal Kelsey. Fisher was aware that early pick-up would provide teachers with a significant amount of time alone with the test documents.

F. Other Evidence

- In 2008-2009, Thomasville Heights met AYP.
- In 2009-2010, Thomasville Heights did not meet AYP.
- Thomasville Heights did not meet its district targets in 2007, 2008, 2009, and 2010.
- One second grade teacher flagged in all subjects in 2009 was flagged again in all subjects in 2010, with even higher standard deviations for wrong-to-right erasures.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

We conclude that cheating occurred at Thomasville Heights on the CRCT in 2009 and in other years. Jennitra Oliver prompted her students to change answers from wrong to right by

rephrasing questions students had missed and telling students to remember what she had taught them in class. Theresa Nickolich admitted to prompting students by pointing to questions she knew they had missed and telling them to re-read it, and by re-reading questions.

We also conclude that Testing Coordinator Tracey Fisher either facilitated or participated in cheating in 2008 and 2009.

In summary, we find Jennitra Oliver, Theresa Nickolich, Janice Kelsey and Tracey Fisher were involved in cheating on the 2009 CRCT.

Principal Janice Kelsey failed in her ultimate responsibility for testing activities and for ensuring the ethical administration of, and proper securing for the 2009 CRCT. It is our conclusion, from the statistical data and the other evidence secured in this investigation, that Principal Kelsey failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT, and adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and she is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

FICKETT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

3935 Rux Road SW
Atlanta, Georgia 30331

Principal: Dr. Anthony Dorsey
Testing Coordinator: Angela Thomas

SRT-1 Executive Director: Dr. Sharon Davis-Williams

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Fickett Elementary in 2009. Thirty-nine people were interviewed at Fickett, some more than once. Two teachers confessed to cheating. Cheating at Fickett is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms, confessions and witness testimony. Principal Anthony Dorsey failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

A. 2009 vs. 2010

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	51.4	9.3
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	37	7
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	17(13)	7
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	7.0	3.9
High Flagged Standard Deviation	20	5.5
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.1	3.0

B. Flagged Classrooms

Teacher	Grade & Test	Standard Deviation
NJIE	1 RD	5.613835169
NJIE	1 LA	5.247525305
NJIE	1 MA	3.783090582
PARKER	1 RD	3.458742598
PARKER	1 LA	3.244756486
ROMENESKO	1 RD	3.299238647
LITTLE	2 LA	5.068094291
LITTLE	2 MA	6.779296001
MARTIN	2 LA	6.876834481
MARTIN	2 MA	5.284125896
TAYLOR	2 LA	4.72562397
TICKLES	2 RD	5.9150809
TICKLES	2 LA	4.758242311
TICKLES	2 MA	5.060000744
WATKINS	2 LA	4.618315338
WATKINS	2 MA	8.606311776
CARTER	3 RD	6.82539656
CARTER	3 LA	4.924853502
CARTER	3 MA	6.605357541
KING	3 RD	3.779877173
KING	3 LA	3.903783686
REDD	3 LA	3.630615899
YOUNG	3 RD	16.47921964
YOUNG	3 LA	10.3293602
YOUNG	3 MA	8.411153143
MILES	4 RD	17.71092772
MILES	4 LA	9.970842028
MILES	4 MA	8.700386529
SCOTT	4 RD	6.378501335
SCOTT	4 LA	5.402838655
SCOTT	4 MA	5.193382083
WHEELER	4 RD	7.988916116
WHEELER	4 LA	3.140110356
WHEELER	4 MA	4.844024558
GRAY	5 RD	8.993842585
WILBOURN	5 RD	19.98720414
WILBOURN	5 MA	14.53405541

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Overview

There are several facts which point to the conclusion that Fickett Elementary School was not managed to ensure that the 2009 CRCT results were accurately reported.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 51.4% for the 2009 CRCT. There were only 20 schools in APS with a higher percentage that year.

Second, of the approximately 1,800 non-APS schools in the state taking the 2009 CRCT only six schools had a higher percentage of flagged classrooms than Fickett Elementary School.

Third, with state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped significantly from 51.4% to 9.3%.

Fourth, of the 37 flagged classrooms at Fickett Elementary School, 24 (64.8% of the total) had standard deviations that exceeded five, and five classrooms exceeded ten standard deviations. At five standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard deviations the probability is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations from the state mean were, for a number of classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at Fickett.

Fifth is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures at Fickett, 72.3% were produced by the flagged classrooms which account for only 51.4% of the total classrooms in the school.

In addition, Principal Dorsey created an environment that encouraged cheating. He informed teachers of the exact number of students that needed to meet expectations on the CRCT to make APS targets. He was pressured by SRT-1 Executive Director, Dr. Sharon Davis-Williams to make targets, and he in turn pressured his teachers.

B. Narrative

At least two teachers cheated by prompting students to erase and change their own answers. The number of classes flagged across all subject areas, and every grade level, is consistent with the pattern at schools system-wide where teachers confessed to organized cheating by erasing.

Principal Anthony Dorsey pressured teachers to improve test scores and meet targets, threatening those who did not meet expectations with PDPs. Teachers were anxious about the pressure to raise scores and about the new, more rigorous evaluation process put in place. Those who confessed to cheating felt it was necessary to keep their jobs.

Principal Dorsey says he had the only key to the area where the tests were stored. When Testing Coordinator Angela Thomas needed access, Dorsey unlocked the door for her. The door locked automatically upon closing.

C. Testimony of Witnesses

I. *Karen Wilbourn (Teacher)*

Karen Wilbourn was a fifth grade teacher and confessed to cheating on the CRCT in 2009.

Wilbourn admitted that she and her proctor, Wanda Patterson, gave students the answers during CRCT testing in 2009. She stated that the proctor assisted her in making answer keys, particularly for the math and reading portions of the test. She and Patterson would use the answer keys to provide students with correct answers. She stated that 2009 was the only year she cheated. Principal Dorsey told teachers that they would be put on a PDP if they did not have enough students meeting and exceeding expectations on the CRCT. She believes Principal Dorsey knew there was cheating. He made it clear that they needed to meet targets.

2. Charlene Martin (Teacher)

Charlene Martin was a second grade teacher in 2009. She confessed to using voice inflection to prompt students when reading the questions and answers on the CRCT. If she saw that a student answered a question incorrectly, she told the student to go back and check it. Martin's motivation for cheating was the pressure she felt from the administration, and because she wanted to keep her job. There was a lot of pressure on teachers to have their classes meet AYP and APS targets. Charlene Martin was told by students during her first year at Fickett that teachers had helped them in the past during testing. She wished she had reported that information to APS.

D. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Anthony Dorsey (Principal)

We interviewed Principal Anthony Dorsey on three occasions. He was represented by counsel each time. He became principal of Fickett in 2007-2008. Principal Dorsey admitted that he informed teachers how many students needed to pass the test in order to meet their targets. He was very knowledgeable about the data concerning targets and was interested in raising the math scores at Fickett. He was the only one with access to the room where the tests were kept, and unlocked the door for the testing coordinator, Angela Thomas. He stated that Thomas secured the door as she left the room. He did not believe that cheating occurred but could not explain the high erasures at his school.

Principal Dorsey stated in his first interview that he did not feel pressure to make targets and did not understand why APS and teachers felt that "making the floor" at Convocation was important. He admitted that Davis-Williams pushed targets and told him that his job was to make targets. Fickett has never made targets under his leadership.

In his second interview, Principal Dorsey was asked to clarify his contradictory statements concerning targets. He explained that he was concerned about student achievement rather than meeting targets. In his third interview, Principal Dorsey refused to answer questions concerning why there were such high wrong-to-right erasures at Fickett in 2009. Through his counsel, he stated that he already answered that question and had nothing more to say.

2. Wanda Patterson (Teacher)

Wanda Patterson was a teacher at Fickett in 2009. She taught small groups of gifted children in several subject areas in grades one through five. Patterson served as a proctor during CRCT testing. She said Karen Wilbourn would go to particular students and point to the answer. This caused the students to erase and change the answers. Patterson denied that she also pointed out answers to students.

3. Angela Thomas (Testing Coordinator)

Angela Thomas was the testing coordinator at Fickett in 2009. She stated that Principal Dorsey had the key card to the room where the tests were kept and access to the school building after hours and on weekends. Dessie Hardwick, Mary King and Assistant Principal Shirley

Smith helped Thomas administer the test. Thomas never erased anything on students' tests or felt pressure to make targets. She stated she was never told that a particular student must pass the CRCT.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

We conclude that Charlene Martin, Karen Wilbourn, and Wanda Patterson cheated on the 2009 CRCT. Based on the statistical evidence and the evidence we have found at schools with similar statistical data, we believe that the flagged teachers at Fickett cheated in the same manner. However, we lack sufficient evidence to determine which additional teachers cheated.

It is our conclusion, from the statistical data and the other evidence secured in this investigation, that Principal Dorsey failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT and adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and he is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

HUTCHINSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

650 Cleveland Avenue
Atlanta, Georgia 30315

Principal: Dr. Rebecca Dashiell-Mitchell
Testing Coordinator: David Brown

SRT-2 Executive Director: Michael Pitts

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Hutchinson Elementary in 2009. Twenty-one people at this school were interviewed, some more than once. Cheating at Hutchinson is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms, a confession and witness testimony. Principal Rebecca Dashiell-Mitchell failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

A. 2009 vs. 2010

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	47	1.6
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	31	1
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	14(9)	1(0)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	8.1	3.6
High Flagged Standard Deviation	26.6	3.6
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.1	3.6

B. Flagged Classrooms

Teachers	Grade & Test	Standard Deviation
ELLIS	1 RD	4.983861483
ELLIS	1 LA	6.464134027
ELLIS	1 MA	8.66682616
GREGOIRE	1 RD	6.49358428
GREGOIRE	1 LA	10.44392629
GREGOIRE	1 MA	8.056756575
JAMES	1 RD	8.469019887
JAMES	1 LA	9.337532558
JAMES	1 MA	11.22006373
PHILLIPS	1 RD	6.612179083
PHILLIPS	1 LA	6.664243578
PHILLIPS	1 MA	12.33001556
ROSSER	1 LA	3.284978647
POLLOCK	2 RD	6.95120196
POLLOCK	2 LA	8.75822097
POLLOCK	2 MA	7.329514704
TRUITT	2 MA	4.098384896
WILLIS	2 RD	4.144427467
MATHIS	3 RD	4.050555889
NEAL	3 RD	4.952403437
STROZIER	3 RD	8.495768181
STROZIER	3 MA	3.172082989
PATTERSON	4 RD	3.069905974
PATTERSON	4 LA	4.069629285
PATTERSON	4 MA	3.572792509
SWEDARSKY	4 RD	9.255002155
SWEDARSKY	4 LA	7.029930938
SWEDARSKY	4 MA	7.543710616
NGUYEN	5 RD	26.55535419
NGUYEN	5 LA	9.809644757
NGUYEN	5 MA	24.91448727

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Overview

There are several facts that point to the conclusion that Hutchinson Elementary School was not managed to ensure that the 2009 CRCT results were accurately reported.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 47% for the 2009 CRCT.

Second, of the approximately 1,800 non-APS schools in the state taking the 2009 CRCT, only seven schools had a higher percentage of flagged classrooms than Hutchinson Elementary School.

Third, with state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped dramatically from 47% to 1.6%.

Fourth, of the 31 flagged classrooms at Hutchinson Elementary School, 21 (68% of the total) had standard deviations that exceeded five, and five classrooms exceeded ten standard deviations. At five standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard

deviations the probability is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations from the state mean were, for a number of classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at this school.

Fifth is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures, 72.1% were produced by the flagged classrooms, which account for only 47% of the total classrooms in the school.

Last, one teacher confessed to giving his students the answers while administering the 2009 CRCT. Teachers were surprised when low-performing students passed the test despite their poor performance on benchmark tests and in the classroom.

B. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Hau Nguyen (Teacher)

Hau Nguyen admitted to cheating in 2009. Nguyen walked around the classroom during the test and stood over his students while they answered questions. If the student answered incorrectly, Nguyen would point to the right answer. He assisted students every fifth question or so.

Yolanda Udoh proctored for Nguyen's class during the 2009 CRCT. Nguyen believes Udoh must have noticed what he was doing. She did not come back after the fourth day of testing and he does not know whether she reported him for cheating.

When The Atlanta Journal-Constitution published the erasure analysis done by GOSA, Principal Rebecca Dashiell-Mitchell gave teachers a questionnaire that asked them to explain their high number of wrong-to-right erasures. Nguyen filled out the questionnaire and was then called to Principal Dashiell-Mitchell's office to meet with her to discuss his response. Testing Coordinator David Brown was present when Nguyen and Principal Dashiell-Mitchell met.

2. Marly Gregoire (Teacher)

When The Atlanta Journal-Constitution published the results of the wrong-to-right erasure analysis, Dashiell-Mitchell placed a one-page questionnaire in each teacher's box. The questionnaire asked the flagged teachers to write any reasons why their classroom had so many wrong-to-right erasures. Principal Dashiell-Mitchell then met with each teacher to discuss the erasure analysis and their explanations.

Gregoire was surprised that some of her students passed the CRCT despite indications that they would not pass. She suspected that Nguyen cheated because his students achieved near perfect pass rates on the test.

3. Yolanda Udoh (Proctor)

Yolanda Udoh was the proctor of Hau Nguyen's classroom during the 2009 CRCT. Udoh denied observing Nguyen assist students by giving them answers to the 2009 CRCT.

4. David Brown (Testing Coordinator)

David Brown gave the investigators the form that Principal Dashiell-Mitchell gave to the flagged teachers requesting an explanation for the flags. Principal Dashiell-Mitchell told Brown that the teachers did not write on the forms and that she did not collect them.

C. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Dr. Rebecca Dashiell-Mitchell (Principal)

Principal Dashiell-Mitchell was interviewed at least two times over the course of this investigation. At her first interview, Dashiell-Mitchell denied conducting her own investigation and denied distributing a questionnaire regarding erasures on the 2009 CRCT. When a GBI agent showed her a copy of the questionnaire obtained from a teacher, Principal Dashiell-Mitchell remembered handing it out. She said that she could not provide a copy of the answered questionnaires because the teachers did not actually write answers, they just met to discuss them. When we interviewed Principal Dashiell-Mitchell she remembered both that she issued questionnaires (she said that she denied it to the GBI because they called it a “survey” and she called it an “audit”) and that the teachers filled out the answers. However, she was unable to give them to us because she did not keep them.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

We conclude that teacher Hau Nguyen cheated on the 2009 CRCT. Based on the statistical evidence and the evidence we have found at schools with similar statistical data, we believe that other flagged teachers cheated in the same manner. However, we lack sufficient evidence to determine which additional teachers cheated.

We also find that Principal Dashiell-Mitchell failed in her ultimate responsibility for supervising testing activities and for ensuring the ethical administration of, and proper security for, the 2009 CRCT. It is our conclusion from the statistical data and other evidence secured in this investigation that Principal Dashiell-Mitchell failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT and adequately supervise testing activities. This resulted in, and she is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

CAPITOL VIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

1442 Metropolitan Parkway
Atlanta, Georgia 30310

Principal: Arlene Snowden
Testing Coordinator: Trennis Harvey

SRT-2 Executive Director: Michael Pitts

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Capitol View Elementary in 2009. Thirty-seven people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Cheating is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms. Principal Arlene Snowden falsified attendance records in 2009 and in other years, and failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

A. 2009 vs. 2010

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	70.8	19.0
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	34	8
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	12(11)	4(3)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	11.4	4
High Flagged Standard Deviation	20.3	6.2
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	4.7	3.2

B. Flagged Classrooms

Teacher	Grade & Test	Standard Deviation
JONES	1 RD	7.203792952
JONES	1 LA	6.795730409
JONES	1 MA	13.17567274
ROBERTSON	1 RD	12.6333877
ROBERTSON	1 LA	13.17067211
ROBERTSON	1 MA	13.88294262
LONGINO	2 RD	5.084938216
LONGINO	2 LA	9.127838661
LONGINO	2 MA	9.654566353
MORELAND	2 LA	4.892918323
GOODMAN	3 RD	10.66126736
GOODMAN	3 LA	12.07847995
GOODMAN	3 MA	11.56960919
JACKSON	3 RD	9.740819486
JACKSON	3 LA	9.605708465
JACKSON	3 MA	10.38831197
ROSS	3 RD	12.0873275
ROSS	3 LA	15.20524426
ROSS	3 MA	20.34651763
HUMMINGS	4 RD	17.19047309
HUMMINGS	4 LA	11.5437338
HUMMINGS	4 MA	17.15986815
WRIGHT	4 RD	8.291637643
WRIGHT	4 LA	4.705049781
WRIGHT	4 MA	9.624676572
BENNETT	5 RD	13.98962206
BENNETT	5 LA	8.066369977
BENNETT	5 MA	16.87181048
PIRTLE	5 RD	16.51922992
PIRTLE	5 LA	8.213768677
PIRTLE	5 MA	12.10537845
SMILEY	5 RD	14.19492007
SMILEY	5 LA	6.866148885
SMILEY	5 MA	13.87975717

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Overview

There are several significant facts which point to the conclusion that Capitol View Elementary School was not managed to ensure that the 2009 CRCT results were accurately reported.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 70.8% for the 2009 CRCT. There were only six schools in APS with a higher percentage in 2009.

Second, of the approximately 1,800 non-APS schools in the state taking the 2009 CRCT, only one school had a higher percentage of flagged classrooms.

Third, with state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped from 70.8% to 19%.

Fourth, of the 34 flagged classrooms at Capitol View, 32 (94% of the total) had standard deviations that exceeded five, and 20 classrooms exceeded ten standard deviations. At five

standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard deviations, the probability is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations from the state mean were, for a number of classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at Capitol View.

Fifth is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures at Capitol View, 94% were produced by the flagged classrooms which account for 70.8% of the total classrooms in the school.

Last, Principal Snowden stated that erasures could be explained by teaching strategies. Capitol View teaches its children to go back and check their work, and erase answers that may be incorrect. Principal Snowden provided no reason why this method – common throughout the country – produced significantly more wrong-to-right erasures at Capitol View than most schools in Georgia. When asked if teachers changed answers at her command, Principal Snowden stated “Did cheating happen? I don’t know, I didn’t do it, I know that,” and that she “can’t make anyone do anything unless I have a gun to their heads, adults are going to be adults.”

B. Narrative

Capitol View had extremely high numbers of wrong-to-right erasures on the 2009 CRCT, particularly in the first, third, fourth, and fifth grades. Multiple teachers discussed students who lacked the skills to meet expectations on the 2009 CRCT, but met or exceeded expectations. Multiple teachers testified that Principal Snowden placed great pressure on them to return high scores on the CRCT.

Corlis Robertson provided an explanation for the high number of wrong-to-right erasures in the first grade. No explanation was provided for the high erasures in the third, fourth, and fifth grades.

At least one teacher acknowledged that cheating occurred on the 2009 CRCT. Principal Snowden directed an office worker to falsify attendance records.

C. Testimony of Witnesses

I. *Tiffany Kelley (Teacher)*

Tiffany Kelley stated that teachers did not have enough time during the testing period to change the number of answers that were changed on the 2009 CRCT. Kelly believes that none of the flagged teachers would have assisted Principal Snowden in changing CRCT answer sheets because of the lack of a close relationship with her.

2. Marcus Goodman (Teacher)

When shown the 2009 CRCT erasure data for Capitol View, Marcus Goodman agreed that cheating must have occurred. Goodman denied changing any answers, but had no explanation for the high number of erasures on his students' answer sheets.

3. April Gomez-McMillian (Teacher)

April Gomez-McMillian did not administer the 2009 CRCT to any students, but served as a hall monitor. She described the pressure placed on teachers by Principal Snowden to achieve high CRCT scores. "Making the floor" was very important to Principal Snowden. Principal Snowden and Trennis Harvey analyzed the APS targets and informed the teachers how many of their students could fail to meet expectations on the CRCT. When CRCT scores were announced, Principal Snowden called all teachers into a meeting and displayed the scores. Principal Snowden praised and applauded the teachers whose students met APS targets.

4. Corlis Robertson (Teacher)

Corlis Robertson denied any knowledge of cheating on the 2009 CRCT. She testified that she and Kimberly Jones participated in a pilot teaching program in 2009. The assessments in the teaching model all required students to select multiple correct answers. She gave the following example: the test question asks the student to select all words below that have the "long e" sound in them. Two or three of the answer choices would contain the "long e" sound, and the students were required to select all correct answers to receive full credit for the question. Robertson explained that although the 2009 CRCT required students to select only one correct answer, the first grade students were confused and often selected more than one answer. She had to repeatedly instruct students to select only the best answer, and to erase all incorrect answers. Only the first grade teachers participated in this program in 2009.

5. Michael Ross (Teacher)

Michael Ross stated that the APS target system is unfair to children. He attempted to get extra help for students who struggled, but not qualify for extra assistance because their CRCT scores were too high.

APS referred Ross to the Georgia Professional Standards Commission for having a high "Caveon Index." The first time he received notification that he was under suspicion for cheating was when he received notice from the PSC. Ross was never interviewed by the Blue Ribbon Commission or anyone from APS. He stated that he never cheated, was never asked to cheat, and had no knowledge of cheating on the CRCT.

Ross stated that he saw a large decrease in Capitol View students exceeding expectations on the 2010 CRCT as opposed to the 2009 CRCT.

D. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Trennis Harvey (Testing Coordinator)

Trennis Harvey stated that during the 2009 CRCT testing window, Principal Snowden only worked until lunch due to health issues. Harvey stated that he had a spare key to Snowden's office, and only he and Snowden possessed keys. Snowden left the building as soon as the tests were returned to her office, and locked her office before she left. Snowden always instructed Harvey that "she wanted to be the one to open her office and the one to be the last one to lock it to make sure everything was secured."

Trennis Harvey stated that if adults changed CRCT answers, he had no knowledge of it, and denied any unethical behavior on his part. When asked if Principal Snowden may have changed answers, Harvey replied "Well, I can only say 100% for myself. But what I will say is that she never gave me any inkling that it was occurring, or that it could be occurring." He did not believe Principal Snowden changed CRCT answer sheets.

2. Arlene Snowden (Principal)

Principal Snowden denied any knowledge of cheating on the CRCT in 2009 or any other year. Capitol View never had a testing irregularity under her tenure. She now works at the APS central office, having been transferred after the Blue Ribbon Commission Report. She believes that this investigation and the Blue Ribbon Commission were politically motivated, and that her transfer from Capitol View by APS was politically motivated as well. She believes she was targeted as a scapegoat by APS. She also stated that she does not "buy in to the whole erasure bit," meaning that she does not believe the erasure analysis to be indicative of cheating.

Principal Snowden stated that erasures could be explained by teaching strategies. Capitol View teaches its children to go back and check their work and erase answers that may be incorrect. Snowden provided no reason why this method – common throughout the country – produced significantly more wrong-to-right erasures at Capitol View than most schools in Georgia. When asked if teachers changed answers at her command, Snowden stated, "Did cheating happen? I don't know, I didn't do it, I know that." She further stated that she "can't make anyone do anything unless I have a gun to their heads, adults are going to be adults."

Snowden acknowledged that only she and Trennis Harvey had keys to access the CRCT materials in 2009.

E. Other Evidence

1. Michelle Redwine (Paraprofessional)

Michelle Redwine testified that Principal Snowden falsified attendance records. Redwine worked in the front office and was responsible for creating folders for teachers that recorded attendance and tardy records. She described one instance when such a folder was given to her by Snowden empty of records. Snowden instructed Redwine to recreate the records. Redwine understood that fewer absences should be shown. Unknown to Snowden, the teacher in question kept a second set of records allowing Redwine to accurately recreate the records. Redwine stated

the accurately recreated records were also subsequently lost, and that multiple teachers voiced complaints of similar issues with attendance records.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

We conclude that Principal Arlene Snowden falsified attendance records.

It is our conclusion from the statistical data and the other evidence secured in this investigation that Principal Snowden failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT and adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and she is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

TOWNS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

760 Bolton Road
Atlanta, Georgia 30331

Principal: Carla Pettis
Testing Coordinator: Dr. Dorothy Keen

SRT-4 Executive Director: Tamara Cotman

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Towns Elementary School in 2009. Forty-two people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Cheating is evidenced at Towns by high numbers of flagged classrooms. Principal Carla Pettis falsified attendance records at this school and failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

A. 2009 vs. 2010

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	63.6	12.1
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	42	8
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	16(14)	5(3)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	8.6	4.0
High Flagged Standard Deviation	16.1	5.1
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.7	3.0

B. Flagged Classrooms

Teacher	Grade & Test	Standard Deviation
DYKES	1 RD	11.16874145
DYKES	1 LA	7.566044607
DYKES	1 MA	5.005126128
FOSTER	2 RD	5.675632634
FOSTER	2 LA	6.189106522
FOSTER	2 MA	5.6588774
NERO	2 MA	3.827116987
WADDEL	2 RD	4.639239175
WADDEL	2 LA	8.780351531
WADDEL	2 MA	8.470834727
CORBETT	3 RD	5.313970403
CORBETT	3 LA	6.839071744
CORBETT	3 MA	11.76788515
FARMER	3 RD	8.495768181
FARMER	3 LA	4.072435023
FARMER	3 MA	7.523044579
NASH	3 RD	6.997372147
NASH	3 LA	4.611869244
NASH	3 MA	9.66038967
TROFORT	3 RD	6.639906071
TROFORT	3 MA	4.094854428
GILBERT	4 MA	5.744326994
GREEN	4 RD	3.73568251
GREEN	4 MA	10.50930578
WEAKS	4 RD	12.36810578
WEAKS	4 LA	7.193411565
WEAKS	4 MA	3.929096979
WOOTEN	4 RD	11.51578308
WOOTEN	4 LA	15.10221601
WOOTEN	4 MA	16.14723092
BURSON	5 RD	12.70347511
BURSON	5 LA	10.30020245
BURSON	5 MA	13.86202075
MORRISON	5 RD	11.76340829
MORRISON	5 LA	11.83901344
MORRISON	5 MA	9.848021516
STEWARD	5 RD	10.16101793
STEWARD	5 LA	5.754511104
STEWARD	5 MA	15.94607529
THOMAS	5 RD	12.70347511
THOMAS	5 LA	7.528097453
THOMAS	5 MA	10.98091468

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Overview

There are several facts which point to the conclusion that Towns Elementary School was not managed to ensure that the 2009 CRCT results were accurately reported to the Georgia Department of Education.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 63.6% for the 2009 CRCT. There were only 12 schools in APS with a higher percentage in 2009.

Second, of the approximately 1,800 non-APS schools in the state taking the 2009 CRCT, only two schools had a higher percentage of flagged classrooms than Towns Elementary School.

Third, with state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped significantly from 63.6% to 12.1%.

Fourth, of the 42 flagged classrooms at Towns Elementary School, 35 (83% of the total) had standard deviations that exceeded five, and 16 classrooms exceeded ten standard deviations. At five standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard deviations the probability is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations from the state mean were, for a number of classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at Towns Elementary School.

Fifth is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures at Towns, 89.1% were produced by the flagged classrooms which account for only 63.6% of the total classrooms in the school.

Last, the statements of Principal Carla Pettis are in direct conflict with other witnesses. Principal Pettis claimed she left the school at 3:30 p.m. during CRCT testing, and that she left with Testing Coordinator Dorothy Keen. But Keen stated that she always stayed late during testing. A staff member corroborated Keen's testimony. Principal Pettis also denied hiring her mother and aunt to help proctor the CRCT. Keen saw both the mother and aunt at the school during the CRCT. Compounding the conflict, Principal Pettis refused to answer questions under oath.

B. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Michelle Torrey (Office Paraprofessional)

In 2009, Michelle Torrey was a paraprofessional working in the front office where Principal Pettis' office was also located. Torrey's desk was next to the conference room off of Principal Pettis' office where the tests were primarily kept during the 2009 CRCT.

At the end of the testing period each day, teachers took the tests to the media center where they checked them in with Testing Coordinator Dr. Dorothy Keen. Keen then wheeled the tests on a cart to the conference room off of Principal Pettis' office and next to Torrey's desk. Keen was generally with the tests in the conference room throughout the afternoon. On a few occasions Principal Pettis was there as well. Around 4:30 or 5:00 p.m., the tests were taken to yet another room where they were "secured." According to Torrey, they were taken to a room "off of the back hall." Sometimes when Torrey left for the day around 5:00 p.m. the tests were still in the conference room.

Torrey saw people erasing things on the answer sheets, but she assumed they were correcting names and student identification numbers. Keen did not let the teachers put student identification numbers on the answer sheets, but insisted on doing it herself.

The room where the tests were kept was locked but Principal Pettis, Keen, the secretary Ms. Thomas, and the night custodian all had keys.

Principal Pettis hired retired teachers to assist with various events, like field day and the CRCT. Two of those teachers were Principal Pettis' mother and aunt. In 2009, they proctored during the CRCT.

Torrey kept the attendance and discipline records at Towns. Beginning in 2004, Principal Pettis instructed Torrey to delete and falsify attendance records to a level that was within the target numbers for AYP. Teachers entered the attendance for their class each day. At the end of the year, Pettis asked Torrey what the numbers were for the school. If the numbers were high, Torrey asked teachers if they had tardy slips they had "missed." Some of the veteran teachers knew what this question meant and produced false tardy slips. If the tardy slips were not enough to get the attendance numbers within the target, Principal Pettis directed Torrey to alter the absences in the computer system.

Torrey believes there was cheating at Towns on the CRCT but that it is more likely the administrators and not the teachers who cheated.

2. Chenee Gilbert (Teacher)

Chenee Gilbert no longer teaches in APS. She left the system in part because of the pressure placed on test scores. Principal Pettis placed Gilbert on a PDP for test scores in 2005 or 2006. She knows of other teachers who were placed on PDPs for test scores.

C. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Carla Pettis (Principal)

Principal Pettis denied cheating; however, she refused to give testimony under oath. Her explanation for the abnormal number of wrong-to-right erasures is that students are taught the process of elimination.

Principal Pettis denied that her mother and aunt helped during the 2009 CRCT testing week. She believes they did assist during the 2008 CRCT.

Principal Pettis said that she left the school around 3:30 in the afternoon during CRCT testing. She and Dorothy Keen left together.

We asked Principal Pettis why she believed the Governor asked us to investigate APS. She responded that she thinks the investigation is racially motivated: "I think that the city of Atlanta, that they [white people] want the city of Atlanta back, and in order to get it back, [they] have to destroy the schools first."

2. Dr. Dorothy Keen (Testing Coordinator)

Dorothy Keen was the testing coordinator in 2009, and she denied cheating.

Each answer sheet required a student identification number. The student identification number is six digits. According to Keen, it takes approximately one second per sheet to fill in this number. If a student was new to the school their number needed to be filled in. Keen, with

assistance from the retired teachers and sometimes Principal Pettis, would check the tests to make sure all student identification numbers were present. If a student identification number was missing, Keen or one of her helpers would add the student identification number. There were only about five students whose student identification numbers were not already on the tests.

According to Dr. Keen, tests were secured in Principal Pettis' office each evening. The tests were only in the conference room for a short period of time and then were moved into Principal Pettis' office, which was then locked. Keen stayed at the school until around 5:00 or 6:00 p.m.

Principal Pettis' mother Charlotte Everett and her aunt Mary Sherman are retired teachers and helped proctor during the 2009 CRCT. Retired teachers helped to enter student identification numbers in 2009.

Keen stayed "late" in the evenings during testing.

D. Other Evidence

Kelli Augburn-Johnson, Dorothy Butler, and Gentry Weeks testified that the teachers are intimidated and are not likely to tell investigators if cheating occurred at Towns.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

We have concerns about the conflicting testimony of Michelle Torrey, Dorothy Keen, and Carla Pettis regarding the entering of student identification numbers and how late the testing coordinator and principal were at the school in the afternoons. However, the evidence is not sufficient to conclude that Dorothy Keen or Principal Carla Pettis cheated.

It is our conclusion, from the statistical data and the other evidence secured in this investigation that Principal Carla Pettis failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT, and adequately supervise the testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and she is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

We also find that Principal Carla Pettis directed Michelle Torrey to falsify attendance records.

BLALOCK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

CLOSED

Principal: Frances Thompson
Testing Coordinators: Charla Cheatham

SRT-4 Executive Director: Tamara Cotman

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Blalock Elementary in 2009. APS closed Blalock at the end of the 2008-2009 school year. However, Blalock Elementary was the primary feeder school into Harper-Archer Middle and former Blalock Principal Frances Thompson is now the principal of Harper-Archer Middle. The testimony discussed below came from interviews conducted at that school. Cheating at Blalock is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms and witness testimony. Principal Frances Thompson failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

A. 2009 vs. 2010

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	66.7	N/A
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	26	N/A
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	11	N/A
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	15.1	N/A
High Flagged Standard Deviation	38.2	N/A
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.9	N/A

B. Flagged Classrooms

Teacher	Grade & Test	Standard Deviation
HUNT	1 MA	4.50425563
GACHETT	1 RD	3.863706346
GACHETT	1 LA	8.485545057
GACHETT	1 MA	9.153922316
MOMPOINT	2 RD	4.266953431
OKEKE	2 LA	3.855958923
HUNTER	3 RD	25.35470283
HUNTER	3 LA	21.63926106
HUNTER	3 MA	23.79024
THURMOND	3 RD	11.77386079
THURMOND	3 LA	10.33781373
THURMOND	3 MA	12.06332534
MAR HALL	3 RD	14.94355801
MAR HALL	3 LA	11.31142492
MAR HALL	3 MA	11.94334015
GRAVES	4 RD	8.493858299
GRAVES	4 LA	7.93008065
FLOOD	4 RD	19.58507323
FLOOD	4 LA	17.52580503
FLOOD	4 MA	13.20184625
JEFFERSON	5 RD	21.85147016
JEFFERSON	5 LA	19.1172379
JEFFERSON	5 MA	38.22817627
BOYD	5 RD	16.47685954
BOYD	5 LA	21.33040312
BOYD	5 MA	30.97232589

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Overview

There are several facts which point to the conclusion that Blalock was not managed to ensure that the 2009 CRCT results were accurately reported.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 66.7% for the 2009 CRCT. There were only eleven schools in APS with a higher percentage in 2009.

Second, of the approximately 1,800 non-APS schools in the state taking the 2009 CRCT, only two schools had a higher percentage of flagged classrooms than Blalock.

Third, of the 26 flagged classrooms at Blalock, 22 (85% of the total) had standard deviations that exceeded five, and 17 classrooms exceeded ten standard deviations. At five standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard deviations the probability is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations from the state mean were, for a number of classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at Blalock.

Fourth is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures at Blalock, 94.4% were produced by the flagged classrooms which account for only 66.7% of the total classrooms in the school.

Finally, current Harper-Archer principal Frances Thompson was the principal at Blalock in 2009. A number of teachers at Harper-Archer believed there was cheating at Blalock. A teacher also told us that students from Blalock seemed to have learned that cheating was acceptable and often cheated at Harper-Archer. There have been conversations among teachers at Harper-Archer that Frances Thompson was brought to Harper-Archer by Tamara Cotman because she cheated at Blalock and Cotman wanted her to cheat at Harper-Archer to get test scores up.

B. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Kelli Koen (Teacher)

Kelli Koen testified that students in her classes that had previously attended Blalock talked about their teachers at Blalock giving them answers on the CRCT. Koen often talked with other Harper-Archer teachers about how many of their students had inflated test scores from elementary school.

2. Malika Syphertt (Teacher)

Malika Syphertt believes that there was cheating at Blalock. The students in her classroom who went to Blalock for elementary school are accustomed to cheating and attempt to cheat “regularly.” She has taught sixth grade students who cannot multiply—a skill they should have learned in elementary school.

Syphertt heard that former Harper-Archer principal Michael Milstead was asked to leave because Harper-Archer had not met AYP in two years and SRT-4 Director Cotman wanted a new principal who would get test scores up.

3. Jerry Willard (Teacher)

Jerry Willard testified that he has taught students that came from Blalock Elementary and he felt they were very far behind academically.

C. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Frances Thompson (Principal)

Principal Thompson denied that there was cheating at Blalock on the 2009 CRCT.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

The evidence suggests someone at Blalock cheated. However, we lack sufficient evidence to determine who specifically engaged in cheating.

We conclude that Principal Frances Thompson failed in her ultimate responsibility for testing activities and for ensuring the ethical administration of, and proper security for, the 2009 CRCT. It is our conclusion from the statistical data and other evidence secured in this investigation that Principal Frances Thompson failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT, and

adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and she is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

WHITEFOORD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

35 Whitefoord Avenue, SE
Atlanta, GA 30317

Principal: Patricia Lavant
Testing Coordinator: Shaun German-Tucker

SRT-1 Executive Director: Dr. Sharon Davis-Williams

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Whitefoord Elementary in 2009. Thirty-two people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Cheating at Whitefoord is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms. Principal Patricia Lavant failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

A. 2009 vs. 2010

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	59.3	13.3
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	32	6
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	14(9)	5(1)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	7.0	4.5
High Flagged Standard Deviation	12.9	6.0
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.5	3.1

B. Flagged Classrooms

Teacher	Grade & Test	Standard Deviation
ALEXANDER	1 MA	5.264860448
RICHARDSON	1 MA	3.967454252
CANTER CAIN	2 MA	3.540054612
ROSALES	2 RD	9.475066106
ROSALES	2 LA	4.601887446
ROSALES	2 MA	7.368520452
BOYANTON	3 RD	5.791856405
BOYANTON	3 LA	4.003054588
BOYANTON	3 MA	9.454887209
CHARLES	3 RD	5.256071631
CHARLES	3 LA	5.464209762
CHARLES	3 MA	5.961345377
WILSON	3 RD	3.851400073
HERBERT	4 RD	4.494680016
HERBERT	4 LA	4.660405272
HERBERT	4 MA	4.071482246
JOYNER KNIGHT	4 RD	10.51475583
JOYNER KNIGHT	4 LA	4.835073703
JOYNER KNIGHT	4 MA	6.099255533
SIMPSON	4 RD	9.795525526
SIMPSON	4 LA	8.196941788
SIMPSON	4 MA	5.713593313
WASHINGTON	4 MA	3.832842202
BRADLEY JAMES	5 RD	11.87061022
BRADLEY JAMES	5 LA	11.03151915
BRADLEY JAMES	5 MA	11.80964867
BYRD	5 RD	12.98517898
BYRD	5 LA	8.032027764
BYRD	5 MA	9.53207868
COLLIER	5 RD	12.41750665
COLLIER	5 LA	4.905974642
COLLIER	5 MA	5.10644017

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

There are several facts which point to a conclusion that Whitefoord Elementary School was not managed to ensure that the 2009 CRCT results were accurately reported.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 59.3% for the 2009 CRCT. There were only 14 schools in APS with a higher percentage in 2009.

Second, of the approximately 1,800 non-APS schools in the state taking the 2009 CRCT, only two had a higher percentage of flagged classrooms than Whitefoord Elementary School.

Third, with state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped from 59.3% to 13.3%.

Fourth, of the 32 flagged classrooms at Whitefoord Elementary, 21 (66% of the total) had standard deviations that exceeded five, and six classrooms exceeded ten standard deviations. At five standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard deviations the probability is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations from the state

mean were, for a number of classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at Whitefoord Elementary School.

Fifth is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures at Whitefoord, 86% were produced by the flagged classrooms which account for only 59.4% of the total classrooms in the school

Principal Patricia Lavant was the principal at Whitefoord Elementary School for the entire 11½ years she was employed by APS. She remained past her eligible retirement time because the erasure scandal was “her mess to fix” and happened under her watch. She remained to do what she could for the teachers and the school. She said there was lots of pressure to improve on students’ scores but not enough to do something immoral. We believe her, but conclude she failed in her managerial role. We commend her acceptance of responsibility for the situation we found at her school and find her acceptance of responsibility to be rare in APS.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

From all of the above, we believe that there is no other rational conclusion but that there was widespread cheating at Whitefoord Elementary School on the 2009 CRCT and that the principal should certainly have known of this misconduct.

Principal Patricia Lavant failed in her ultimate responsibility for testing activities and for ensuring the ethical administration of and proper security for the 2009 CRCT. It is our conclusion from the statistical data and the other evidence secured in this investigation that Ms. Lavant failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT, and adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and she is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

BOYD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

1891 Johnson Rd. NW
Atlanta, Georgia 30318

Principal: Emalyn Foreman
Testing Coordinator: Lovie Alridge

SRT-4 Executive Director: Tamara Cotman

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Boyd Elementary in 2009. Thirty-six people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Cheating at Boyd is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms. Principal Emalyn Foreman failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

A. 2009 vs. 2010

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	56.1	15.7
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	32	8
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	13(11)	6(1)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	8.5	4.1
High Flagged Standard Deviation	23.3	6.3
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.3	3.2

B. Flagged Classrooms

Teachers	Grades & Test	Standard Deviation
JONES, D.	1 RD	3.392897049
JONES, D.	1 LA	3.614377155
JONES, D.	1 MA	4.72146137
NASH	1 LA	3.768145723
NASH	1 MA	15.49960551
DREW	1 LA	5.946929996
DREW	1 MA	4.413271695
HOLLIS	1 RD	11.00600298
HOLLIS	1 LA	13.04612483
HOLLIS	1 MA	14.47479705
BISHOP	2 RD	19.64372563
BISHOP	2 LA	22.68786194
BISHOP	2 MA	23.30240378
NELSON	2 RD	9.902731254
NELSON	2 LA	4.401081116
NELSON	2 MA	6.631521845
BENTON	2 RD	10.8615193
BENTON	2 LA	7.17956838
BENTON	2 MA	6.574156055
CLARK	2 RD	5.260713844
CLARK	2 LA	3.784059819
MCCORMICK	3 RD	12.16623541
MCCORMICK	3 LA	8.913555206
MCCORMICK	3 MA	8.686863626
MOMON	3 RD	4.250014593
MOMON	3 LA	8.233257646
MOMON	3 MA	3.27411782
EVERETT	4 RD	7.459472938
SAMUELS	5 LA	3.925887521
ARCHIBALD	5 RD	3.393715479
ARCHIBALD	5 LA	5.763550874
ARCHIBALD	5 MA	4.416404002

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Overview

There are several facts which point to the conclusion that Boyd Elementary School was not managed to ensure that the 2009 CRCT results were accurately reported to the Georgia Department of Education.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 56.1% for the 2009 CRCT. With state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped from 56.1% to 15.7%.

Second, of the approximately 1,800 non-APS schools in the state taking the 2009 CRCT, only three schools had a higher percentage of flagged classrooms than Boyd.

Third, of the 32 flagged classrooms at Boyd, 20 (62.5% of the total) had standard deviations that exceeded five, and nine classrooms exceeded ten standard deviations. At five standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard deviations the probability is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations from the State mean were, for a number of classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at Boyd.

Fourth is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures at Boyd, 86.1% were produced by the flagged classrooms which account for only 56.1% of the total classrooms in the school.

B. Narrative

Cheating occurred on the 2009 CRCT by teachers or administrators erasing and changing student answers. Boyd Elementary has an open concept design in which classrooms have no doors. The tests were locked in a cabinet in the media center. Principal Foreman had the only key to the cabinet; the media specialist and Principal Foreman had the only keys to the media center. Although no witness testified to seeing anyone changing answers, the weight of the evidence indicates that cheating occurred at this school.

C. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Ephigenia Paulk (Teacher)

Ephigenia Paulk was a Spanish teacher at Boyd in 2009. Paulk claimed she had not witnessed cheating but believed cheating has occurred since the 1990s based on her observations of students' inability to read. She stated that Principal Foreman did not like teachers to report disciplinary issues because she expected teachers to resolve it on their own. Principal Foreman told her to change an F to a passing grade on more than one occasion. Principal Foreman has an inner circle including Tiffany Momon, Rhonda Nelson, Tiffany Hollis, and Mignon Hardemon.

2. Shanay Benton (Teacher)

Shanay Benton denied knowledge of cheating on the CRCT. On a couple of occasions while passing out her test booklets she noticed a few of them were out of order. Benton also indicated that Principal Foreman and Testing Coordinator Lovie Alridge pressured teachers to improve test scores, meet targets and "make the floor." Benton believed that some targets were unattainable.

3. Lovie Alridge (Testing Coordinator)

Lovie Alridge was the Testing Coordinator in 2009. She did not erase answers or return to the school after hours. She did not believe that any teachers erased answers but thought that the erasures were caused by students changing answers.

4. Shanelle Clark (Teacher)

Shanelle Clark stated that she was not surprised by her students' scores. Lovie Alridge appeared to be very strict about testing protocol. Clark stated that Principal Foreman asked her to change an F to a passing grade because Clark had not followed proper procedures before giving the F. She resigned because she felt Principal Foreman made false reports against her when she was eligible for tenure. Principal Foreman had a close relationship with Alridge, Mignon Hardemon, Amzie Samuels and Tiffany Momon.

5. Chalita Bishop (Teacher)

Chalita Bishop claimed it was impossible for a teacher to cheat on the CRCT. The testing coordinator had strict protocols. Bishop thought it was strange that particular students passed the test, but was sure that cheating had not occurred in her classroom.

6. Mignon Hardemon (Counselor)

Mignon Hardemon was the counselor in 2009 and assisted Alridge with the tests. She recorded her interviews with us on her cellular phone. Hardemon had no explanation for the high wrong-to-right erasures.

7. Emalyn Foreman (Principal)

Emalyn Foreman was the principal of Boyd in 2009. She became principal in the 2008-2009 school year. She denied any cheating or knowledge of cheating. Foreman's explanation for the high wrong-to-right erasures was that students were taught to go back over their tests. She was not surprised by the students' high scores but could offer no explanation for the drop in scores in 2010. Principal Foreman denied she felt pressure to meet targets. She stated that Boyd did not meet its targets but had met AYP.

Regarding allegations that she had told teachers to change an F to a passing grade, Principal Foreman explained that there was a process that had to be followed before a student could receive an F. Parents had to be notified and made part of the process and documentation had to be produced to justify the grade.

Principal Foreman claimed that she had the only key to the cabinet in the media center where the tests were stored. She also had a key to the media center. Both keys were on a chain and locked in her desk. Only the testing coordinator had access to the tests during the testing window.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

We believe there is no other conclusion but that there was widespread cheating at Boyd Elementary School on the 2009 CRCT and that the principal should have known of this.

Principal Foreman failed in her ultimate responsibility for testing activities and for ensuring the ethical administration of, and proper security for the 2009 CRCT. It is our conclusion from the statistical data and the other evidence secured in this investigation, that Principal Foreman failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT, and adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and she is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

WEST MANOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

570 Lynhurst Drive, SW
Atlanta, GA 30311

Principal: Cheryl Twyman
Testing Coordinator: Tiffany Harvey

SRT-1 Executive Director: Dr. Sharon Davis-Williams

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at West Manor Elementary in 2009. Thirty-two people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Cheating at West Manor is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms. Principal Cheryl Twyman failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

A. 2009 vs. 2010

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	54.9	28.9
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	28	13
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	13(9)	8(3)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	7.9	6.1
High Flagged Standard Deviation	18.5	19.8
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.3	3.2

B. Flagged Classrooms

Teacher	Grade & Test	Standard Deviation
ANDERSON	1 MA	3.908283396
DALLAS	1 MA	5.616478234
WHITAKER GRAHAM	1 RD	5.715533773
WHITAKER GRAHAM	1 LA	4.742821759
WHITAKER GRAHAM	1 MA	8.416864645
PAGE	2 LA	5.034765376
PAGE	2 MA	3.338647544
WILDER	2 LA	4.50232861
CARTER	3 RD	7.673099015
CARTER	3 LA	5.322826534
CARTER	3 MA	12.82614325
LAWRENCE	3 RD	9.140511243
LAWRENCE	3 LA	4.733632175
LAWRENCE	3 MA	14.38694627
LEWIS GAMBLE	3 RD	13.82862802
LEWIS GAMBLE	3 LA	8.995334767
LEWIS GAMBLE	3 MA	18.49699548
TURNER	3 RD	11.59467722
TURNER	3 LA	6.2593922
BULLARD	4 RD	5.623989755
JASPER	4 RD	6.343220061
JASPER	4 MA	7.931151075
BLOXSON	5 RD	5.927166066
BLOXSON	5 LA	4.351273098
BLOXSON	5 MA	9.752388171
FERGUSON	5 RD	6.827040213
FERGUSON	5 LA	6.941173209
FERGUSON	5 MA	12.42261959

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

There are several facts which point to a conclusion that West Manor Elementary School was not managed to ensure that the 2009 CRCT results were accurately reported.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 54.9% for the 2009 CRCT. There were only 17 schools in APS with a higher percentage.

Second, of the approximately 1,800 non-APS schools in the state taking the 2009 CRCT, only four had a higher percentage of flagged classrooms than West Manor.

Third, with state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped from 54.9% to 28.9%.

Fourth, of the 28 flagged classrooms at West Manor, 22 (78% of the total) had standard deviations that exceeded five, and six classrooms exceeded ten standard deviations. At five standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard deviations the probability is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations from the state mean were, for a number of classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at West Manor.

Fifth, is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures 82% were produced by the flagged classrooms which account for only 54.9% of the total classrooms in the school

Last, Principal Twyman had no explanation for the high standard deviations on the 2009 CRCT at West Manor, and was barely cooperative.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

We believe that there is no other rational conclusion but that there was widespread cheating at West Manor Elementary School on the 2009 CRCT and that the principal should have known of this misconduct.

Principal Cheryl Twyman failed in her ultimate responsibility for testing activities and for ensuring the ethical administration of and proper security for the 2009 CRCT. It is our conclusion from the statistical data and the other evidence secured in this investigation that Principal Cheryl Twyman failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT and adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and she is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

TURNER MIDDLE SCHOOL

CLOSED

Principal: Karen Riggins-Taylor

SRT-4 Executive Director: Tamara Cotman

Testing Coordinators: Melanie Robinson & Keala Edwards-Cooper

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Turner Middle in 2009. Two people were interviewed at this school. Cheating is evidenced at Turner Middle by a high number of flagged classrooms. Principal Karen Riggins-Taylor failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

A. 2009 vs. 2010

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	54	9.3
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	34	5
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	18(13)	3(2)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	8.4	3.2
High Flagged Standard Deviation	26	3.7
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.2	3.0

B. Flagged Classrooms

Teacher	Grade & Test	Standard Deviation
BROWN	6 RD	10.51882653
BROWN	6 MA	16.23933127
CULPEPPER	6 RD	8.670894583
CULPEPPER	6 MA	25.97920266
DAVIS	6 RD	8.20082255
DAVIS	6 LA	4.467418713
DAVIS	6 MA	25.14705933
WORD	6 RD	5.598186093
WORD	6 MA	7.801212402
JONES, B.	7 RD	3.569289253
BALL RIVNER	7 RD	3.371698651
BALL RIVNER	7 LA	4.784116263
BALL RIVNER	7 MA	8.320695667
CLAY	7 MA	5.401134352
LEONARD	7 LA	4.783422885
LEONARD	7 MA	15.04301674
THOMAS	7 MA	15.43576822
BAYNES	8 RD	3.403346392
BLAIR	8 RD	3.526341592
BLAIR	8 MA	16.55822821
CARR	8 RD	5.197767678
CARR	8 MA	4.679822562
CHAPMAN	8 RD	4.738508821
CHAPMAN	8 LA	3.193839303
CHAPMAN	8 MA	5.173015929
CRAWFORD	8 RD	4.004065578
CRAWFORD	8 MA	14.15098834
MUKONO	8 MA	5.567967465
NUNN	8 RD	9.979282261
NUNN	8 MA	9.18464465
SAWYER	8 RD	8.23781398
SAWYER	8 MA	4.527173489
SMITH	8 RD	5.850408204
SMITH	8 MA	5.219466222

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Overview

There are several facts which point to the conclusion that Turner Middle School was not managed to ensure that the 2009 CRCT results were accurately reported.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 54% for the 2009 CRCT. With state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped significantly from 54% to 9.3%.

Second, of the approximately 1,800 non-APS schools in the state taking the 2009 CRCT, only four had a higher percentage of flagged classrooms than Turner Middle School.

Third, of the 34 flagged classrooms at Turner Middle School, 22 (63% of the total) had standard deviations that exceeded five, and eight classrooms exceeded ten standard deviations. At five standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard deviations the probability is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations from the state

mean were, for a number of classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at Turner Middle School.

Fourth is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures 85% were produced by the flagged classrooms which account for only 54% of the total classrooms in the school.

B. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Mary Gordon (Teacher)

Mary Gordon taught at Turner Middle School in 2009 and now teaches at Benjamin Carson. Gordon was given the common assessment test and an answer sheet one year and told to administer the test. She refused to administer the tests and when she told her supervisors about the incident later, she was told that she misunderstood. She was told the assessment and accompanying answer sheet were meant to be “teaching tools,” but Gordon said it was clear she was supposed to cheat. She was later placed on a PDP.

C. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Karen Riggins-Taylor (Principal)

Principal Riggins-Taylor denied cheating but did not have an alternate explanation for the unusually high number of wrong-to-right erasures. She stated that she always made a point not to go into the halls or the classrooms during testing. She stayed in the main office. She did not have an explanation for why this was her practice.

D. Other Evidence

OIR investigated allegations of cheating at Turner in the spring of 2009. An anonymous complainant alleged that Principal Riggins-Taylor and other teachers cheated on the 2009 writing test. He or she also alleged that Principal Riggins-Taylor organized a group of teachers to cheat on the 2009 CRCT.

APS hired Stan Williams to investigate the allegations. Williams found that the claims were unsubstantiated.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

From all of the above, we believe that there is no other rational conclusion but that there was widespread cheating at Turner Middle School on the 2009 CRCT and that the principal should have known of this.

Principal Riggins-Taylor failed in her ultimate responsibility for testing activities and for ensuring the ethical administration of, and proper security for the 2009 CRCT. It is our conclusion from the statistical data and the other evidence secured in the investigation that Principal Karen Riggins-Taylor failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT, and adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and she is responsible for,

falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

WHITE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

1890 Detroit Avenue
Atlanta, Georgia 30314

Principal: Tamarah Larkin-Currie
Testing Coordinator: Kevin Wright

SRT-4 Executive Director: Tamara Cotman

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at White Elementary in 2009. Twenty-nine people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Cheating at White is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms. Principal Tamarah Larkin-Currie failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

A. 2009 vs. 2010

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	47.4	22.9
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	27	11
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	14(11)	8(3)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	6.8	4.2
High Flagged Standard Deviation	18.8	5.7
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.1	3.2

B. Flagged Classrooms

Teacher	Grade & Test	Standard Deviation
ANDREWS	1 LA	3.093352558
ANDREWS	1 MA	13.31846401
DICKENS	1 LA	4.305045861
DICKENS	1 MA	6.582281814
WRIGHT	2 MA	5.396188472
GILBERT JACKSON	2 MA	3.095028739
HOWARD	3 RD	5.696759054
HOWARD	3 MA	7.216407716
MOMON	3 RD	18.77228641
MOMON	3 MA	10.22071985
YOUNGINER	3 RD	4.019487408
YOUNGINER	3 MA	12.2710999
BLOUNT	4 RD	9.625215713
BLOUNT	4 MA	4.500538231
NEGUSSE	4 RD	4.109736232
NEGUSSE	4 MA	3.156223239
BARRETT	5 RD	3.761841042
BARRETT	5 MA	4.00108088
CARVIL	5 MA	10.32101268
CONYERS	5 RD	9.50849652
CONYERS	5 MA	5.544520999
DONDELL	5 RD	10.30434773
DONDELL	5 LA	3.400448928
DONDELL	5 MA	5.161987619
EDWARDS	5 RD	8.182077833
EDWARDS	5 LA	4.58897914
EDWARDS	5 MA	3.727487447

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

There are several facts which point to the conclusion that White Elementary School was not managed to ensure that the 2009 CRCT results were accurately reported.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 47.4% for the 2009 CRCT. There were only 23 schools in APS with a higher percentage in 2009.

Second, of the approximately 1,800 non-APS schools in the state taking the 2009 CRCT, only six had a higher percentage of flagged classrooms than White Elementary School.

Third, with state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped significantly from 47.4% to 22.9%.

Fourth, of the 27 flagged classrooms at White Elementary School, 15 (55.6% of the total) had standard deviations that exceeded five, and six classrooms exceeded ten standard deviations. At five standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard deviations the probability is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations from the state mean were, for a number of classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at White Elementary School.

Fifth is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures at White, 77% were produced by the flagged classrooms which account for only 47.4% of the total classrooms in the school.

Sixth, Kevin Wright, the Instructional Liaison Specialist at White Elementary during the 2009 CRCT, stated only Principal Larkin-Currie had both keys to her office and the conference room within her office where CRCT materials were stored when not being used for testing. She thus had sole access to the stored tests at White.

Last, Larkin-Currie stated in her February 2, 2011, interview that she believed students were responsible for the erasures. She further stated she had no knowledge or belief of how cheating could have occurred at White Elementary. In her May 10, 2010, interview by KPMG representatives as a part of the Blue Ribbon Commission investigation, she stated as a fact that no teacher would cheat. It is apparent Larkin-Currie was out of touch with what was going on in her school.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

Principal Tamarah Larkin-Currie failed in her ultimate responsibility for testing activities and for ensuring the ethical administration of and proper security for the 2009 CRCT. It is our conclusion from the statistical data and the other evidence secured in this investigation that Principal Tamarah Larkin-Currie failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT, and adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and she is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

HARPER ARCHER MIDDLE SCHOOL

130 Trinity Avenue SW
Atlanta, GA 30303-3626

Principal: Michael Milstead
Testing Coordinator: Mary Brooks

SRT-4 Executive Director: Tamara Cotman

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Harper Archer Middle in 2009. Fifty-two people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Although no one confessed, the teachers, almost unanimously, agree that cheating occurred. Cheating at Harper Archer is evidenced by witness testimony.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

A. 2009 vs. 2010

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	24.1	0.7
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	34	1
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	26(4)	1(0)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	15.8	3.2
High Flagged Standard Deviation	34.7	3.2
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.8	3.2

B. Flagged Classrooms

Teacher	Grade& Test	Standard Deviation
AXTEL	6 MA	12.03118873
BOWERS	6 MA	28.16160923
BROWN	6 RD	5.320535643
BROWN	6 LA	3.778722147
BROWN	6 MA	20.0207102
DEEPNARIN	6 RD	22.62421034
DEEPNARIN	6 LA	13.33491863
DEEPNARIN	6 MA	27.13603784
GOODWIN	6 MA	22.48896968
KOEN	6 MA	5.451050354
MOBLEY	6 MA	26.91451486
STARR	6 MA	7.484407902
WILLIAMS	6 MA	8.80465121
GLENN	7 MA	13.4282406
JONES	7 MA	9.893280264
LESLIE	7 RD	9.878794894
LESLIE	7 LA	6.430200754
LESLIE	7 MA	21.61988291
MAY	7 MA	17.85009224
MILLS	7 MA	13.79356918
PRESIDENT	7 RD	5.744667327
WILLARD	7 MA	15.84628142
BROWN	8 MA	14.89348894
DEEPNARAIN	8 MA	4.582951024
JONES, N	8 MA	13.69397201
JONES, T	8 RD	34.6715554
JONES, T	8 LA	19.66876267
JONES, T	8 MA	15.76473105
LEFTWICH	8 MA	21.15254429
LOVETT	8 MA	19.63901724
MILLEDGE	8 MA	13.31518156
PURNELL	8 MA	19.39589402
STALLWORTH	8 MA	13.84211581
SYPHERTT	8 MA	29.48081698

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Overview

There are several significant facts which point to the conclusion that Harper Archer Middle School was not managed to ensure that the 2009 CRCT results were accurately reported.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 24.1% for the 2009 CRCT. With state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped significantly from 24.1% to 0.7%.

Second, of the 34 flagged classrooms at Harper Archer 32 (94% of the total) had standard deviations that exceeded five, and 24 classrooms exceeded ten standard deviations. At five standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard deviations the probability is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations from the state mean were, for a number of classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at Harper Archer.

Third is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures at Harper Archer 69% were produced by the flagged classrooms which account for only 24.1% of the total classrooms in the school.

Finally, the majority of the teachers interviewed believed cheating occurred. The teachers' consensus is the administrators and SRT-4 personnel cheated. The teachers also believe that Principal Milstead left Harper Archer because SRT-4 Executive Director Tamara Cotman wanted him to cheat and he refused.

B. Narrative

Harper Archer Middle School has historically struggled in math. Low math scores and a 20% special education population prevented Harper Archer from making AYP year after year. Harper Archer had not made AYP for at least the last three years and was on the State's Needs Improvement List in the 2008-2009 school year. Tamara Cotman, whose office was located in the same building as Harper Archer, put pressure on Principal Michael Milstead and the math coaches (Barbara Bienemy and Arn St. Cyr) to improve math scores and make AYP. Cotman put Principal Milstead on a PDP. Milstead said he understood that if Harper Archer did not make AYP in 2009, he would be fired. Cotman made it clear to Milstead that the key to staying employed by APS was to make AYP "by any means necessary."

Principal Milstead believed that Cotman was more interested in the test scores than the students. Principal Milstead refused to pressure teachers about scores. He explicitly instructed teachers they were not to do anything unethical. Under Milstead, the school made steady, but incremental improvements. In early 2009, prior to the CRCT, Principal Milstead announced that he was leaving APS at the end of the school year because of differences with the administration. Although he did not specifically name Cotman, the teachers knew that she constantly threatened Milstead with his job if the school did not make AYP. The teachers and staff suspected that Cotman fired Milstead because he refused to cheat to get scores up.

Milstead expressed his concern at a principals' meeting that too many students arrived at Harper Archer from the "feeder" elementary schools with exemplary CRCT scores, but these students were several grade levels behind. Milstead suggested that the elementary and middle school principals work together more and share information to address this problem. This meeting occurred in May 2008. In August of 2008, Cotman met with Milstead and told him that the principals were very upset about his comments. Cotman was angry and gave Milstead a verbal reprimand. Later, she told him she would not be renewing his contract. Milstead resigned instead.

Teachers were shocked at the large jumps in math scores on the 2009 CRCT. Many teachers discussed that the math scores could not be legitimate. They knew their students could not have scored so well. Teachers described a Special Education math student who could not use a calculator, but exceeded on the CRCT. Students who could not read passed the CRCT. One teacher reported that one of her students slept through the entire test, but still passed.

Teachers were not surprised to learn that Harper Archer was flagged and that 25 of the 34 flagged classes were math classes. Virtually every teacher at Harper Archer believed that

cheating occurred. Not one teacher believed that Principal Milstead was involved in cheating. Teachers uniformly pointed to administrators and SRT-4 personnel who had access to the tests. The individuals on the testing team with access to the tests included: Testing Coordinator Mary Brooks, ILS Sharon Green, Special Education Director Tanya Woods, math coaches Barbara Bienemy and Arn St. Cyr, and SRT-4's Model Teacher Leader, Diamond Jack. Principal Milstead and his secretary, Ms. Westbrook, and certain SRT-4 personnel, including Tamara Cotman, had access to the vault where the tests were stored.

The day after the math portion of the test was given in 2009, the custodian, Joie Phillips, went to the SRT-4 office to change out a water cooler when he heard some of the SRT-4 staff discussing that the students were "doing good on the test." Mr. Phillips shared this information with some of the teachers.

C. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Michael Milstead (Principal)

Principal Milstead worked at Harper Archer Middle School from 2006 to 2009. Tamara Cotman placed Milstead on a PDP two out of the three years he was employed at Harper Archer because the school did not make AYP targets. Even though the school showed growth, because they did not make AYP or targets, Milstead scored below expectations on his evaluations. Mr. Milstead attributes the challenges at Harper Archer to a 20% special education population. The state average is approximately 7-8%. The school also historically struggled in math and science, but showed progress over the years he served as principal. Milstead believed his math teachers worked hard and spent a lot of time tutoring students and developing strategies to assist them. Cotman made it clear on several occasions that Milstead would be without a job if the school did not make AYP. Cotman did not want Harper Archer in the "needs improvement" category again. Principal Milstead understood Cotman wanted him to make AYP "by any means necessary." It was clear to Principal Milstead that Cotman's primary concern was test scores, not the students.

Principal Milstead resigned from APS in 2009 after Cotman told him she would not be renewing his contract. Milstead believes that Cotman did this because of comments he made at a principals' meeting in May 2008. During that meeting, the principals were talking about the CRCT. Milstead expressed that a lot of students arriving at Harper Archer from the elementary schools showed exemplary CRCT scores from fifth grade, yet were multiple grade levels behind academically. Milstead expressed his desire that the principals work together and share information to eliminate this problem. In August of 2008, Cotman told him the principals were very upset about what he said at the meeting. One principal wanted Cotman to do something about his remarks. Cotman was angry with Milstead and gave him a verbal reprimand.

When the 2009 CRCT scores were published, Principal Milstead was astonished by how well the eighth grade students had performed as a whole, but particularly by the double-digit jump in math scores. Milstead had been in administration for a decade and had never seen double-digit gains in one subject area.

Milstead could not explain the high number of erasures. Cheating could not have occurred during the school day without him knowing about it. Only those with keys and access to the tests could be responsible. The tests were stored in a vault in one of the hallways. Milstead, and his secretary, Selitha Westbrook, had a key. Testing Coordinator Mary Brooks either had a key as well or she used Ms. Westbrook's key. Principal Milstead assumed Cotman also had a key to the vault. Cotman had access to the building as well, as did some of her SRT-4 employees. On some mornings, Principal Milstead reported to school early and the model teacher leaders from Cotman's office were already there. One of the SRT-4 employees was Model Teacher Leader Diamond Jack. She was very close with Executive Director Cotman and was "not a friend of Harper Archer." SRO Campbell and ILS Green were also close to Cotman.

Principal Milstead did not remember anyone staying late the week of testing and added that he tried to get everyone out of the school when testing was over. No one should have been in the building during the weekend after testing. Principal Milstead was surprised at the length of time the test documents remained in the school when testing was over.

During the 2008-2009 school year, Milstead noticed that more SRT employees were present during the week of testing than in years past. Typically only one SRT-4 representative would be at the school, but that year there were two or three additional SRT employees at the school.

2. Lebroyce Sublett (Assistant Principal)

Lebroyce Sublett served as the assistant principal at Harper Archer beginning in 2006-2007. Sublett said Principal Milstead left Harper Archer because he was forced out by Cotman, who wanted higher CRCT scores to meet AYP and APS targets. It was implied at APS that if you did not make targets, you would lose your job, and he saw this happen to others. Sublett and Principal Milstead were both put on a PDP by Cotman because of the performance of the school. Sublett and Principal Milstead refused to do anything unethical, but after being put on a PDP repeatedly, Milstead began looking for a new job. Cotman wanted Milstead to put teachers on a PDP. Principal Milstead was told that if he would not put the teachers on PDP he would be put on one himself. Sublett knew that PDPs were used to get rid of teachers who did not "fit the mold." Milstead refused.

Cotman encouraged Principal Milstead and Assistant Principal Sublett to visit Parks Middle School, to see what Parks was doing "right." They visited Parks, and were not surprised that they saw nothing extraordinary going on. They believed Parks' scores were achieved by cheating.

Sublett suspects the SRT and model teacher leaders are responsible for the erasures that occurred at Harper Archer. SRT employees had access to the building and the secure storage area.

3. Deborah Mills (Special Education Teacher)

Deborah Mills was surprised at the high number of WTR erasures on the CRCT at Harper Archer. She did not recall any excessive erasing during the testing for her special education students. She did hear regular education teachers discussing that they were surprised by the

results for the math section of the CRCT. Mills believed it was clear something happened with regard to the math portion of the CRCT and states that APS created a culture where testing was “do or die.”

4. Renee Goodwin (Teacher)

Renee Goodwin has been a teacher at Harper Archer since 2005. Goodwin reported that she was shocked that her classroom was flagged and wondered what happened. The math scores in 2008-2009 increased significantly and the increase was not consistent with the work that students did throughout the year. There were students that passed or exceeded that should not have passed according to projections by the teachers.

The teachers at Harper Archer provided a projection list to the administration, referred to as “bubble list.” This list projected how each student in each class would perform on the CRCT.

5. Robin Glenn (Teacher)

Robin Glenn was a teacher at Harper Archer from 2006 until January 2011 when she was transferred to Perkerson Elementary. Harper Archer always struggled in math. The students at Harper Archer could barely do their multiplication tables. When Glenn saw the 2009 CRCT scores, she was shocked. Some special education students scored higher than gifted students in math. Glenn does not believe that teachers or administrators changed the students’ tests.

6. Brandy Williams (Teacher)

Brandy Williams began working at Harper Archer during the 2008-2009 school year. Williams was surprised by several students in her class who passed the CRCT. She described one student in particular that failed in class all year, but passed the CRCT. Williams recalls providing a projection sheet of how she expected her students to perform on the CRCT to ILS Green, Principal Milstead and possibly the math coach, Arn St. Cyr.

Williams denied erasing anything on her students’ tests or doing anything to trigger her students to erase. Cotman and Principal Milstead pressured Green and St. Cyr with regard to improving math scores. During content meetings, Green and St. Cyr would give the faculty a hard time about improving math scores as well.

Williams left immediately after school during testing, but recalled that Green, as well as the other instructional coaches, worked late.

Principal Milstead put Williams on a PDP for low test scores after her first year at Harper Archer because Cotman instructed him to do so.

7. Sheena Simmons (Teacher)

Sheena Simmons arrived at Harper Archer in 2008 under the Teach for America program. During the time she was employed at Harper Archer there were four different principals assigned to the school. She described the climate at Harper Archer as a negative atmosphere. She felt that the teachers were “setup” because of all the change and instability among the administration.

Mr. Milstead was the principal in 2008-2009, but left because he had one idea of what was best for the students and other people had different ideas. Simmons did not believe that Principal Milstead would cheat or erase answers on students' tests. Cotman told the principals that they needed to make AYP "by any means necessary." Principal Milstead stressed that teachers should not do anything they felt would be wrong.

When confronted with the erasure analysis, Simmons was suspicious of the amount of erasures from wrong to right. Simmons was concerned that 36 questions were erased from wrong to right.

8. Malika Syphert (Teacher)

Malika Syphert administered the CRCT in 2009. She placed her students in alphabetical order in rows. After administering the test, she picked up the tests in alphabetical order and returned them in that fashion. Sometimes the testing documents would no longer be in alphabetical order when she picked them up the next day. Syphert said this could have been because of the makeup tests, which were administered by Testing Coordinator Brooks.

Syphert recalled conversations among teachers about former principal Michael Milstead refusing to cheat resulting in Cotman asking him to leave. Cotman was considered an authoritarian and a dictator. Frances Thompson replaced Principal Milstead. Cotman and Thompson were close.

When the teachers received the 2009 CRCT results, they did not want to share them with the students. The math teachers believed the math scores were inflated. Two teachers expressed their concerns about these math scores to St. Cyr and Bienemy, the math coaches.

Syphert was not surprised when Harper Archer was flagged because of the inflated math scores.

9. Kelli Koen (Teacher)

Kelli Koen denied knowledge of, or participation in, cheating. She did not see any students erasing excessively during testing and said she would have noticed if students had erased excessively. When she learned Harper Archer was one of the flagged schools, she discussed this with Brandy Williams, and other math teachers. There was discussion among the teachers that Green, who had a math background, and Tanya Woods were responsible for the erasures.

Koen believed something was happening with CRCT documents when teacher Matthew Leftwich's students' test scores came in. All of his students passed, with large gains in math scores. Koen knew those students could not have performed on that level.

Principal Milstead wanted the school to make targets during the 2008-2009 school year, but never threatened to place teachers on a PDP. However, Principal Frances Thompson told the teachers that they could be placed on a PDP for low test scores.

10. Roshanda May (Teacher)

Roshanda May believes there was cheating, but denied that she was involved. Cotman and Green would have access to the tests. Cotman pressured Principal Milstead to improve the test scores, which is why he left after the 2008-2009 school year.

11. Nautrie Jones (Teacher)

Principal Milstead resigned prior to the 2009 tests being given. He told the faculty he had resigned and said that everyone had certain goals they were trying to achieve, but he had different ideas about how to reach them. When the 2009 CRCT scores came back, Nautrie Jones and other teachers on her grade level team were all very upset because they knew their students had not legitimately achieved their scores. Teachers at Harper Archer were not involved. She believed people on the SRT level, including the model teacher leaders, were involved.

12. Andrea Leslie (Special Education Teacher)

Andrea Leslie said that the high number of erasures in all three of her special education classrooms could only occur by someone erasing and changing her students' answers. Leslie named Green, Brooks, and the math coaches, Jack, St. Cyr and another math coach, as having access to the tests. The SRT-4 staff and model teacher leaders also had access to the tests and testing materials. Leslie denied cheating.

Ms. Leslie recalled there was a student in her class who had on headphones and a hood during the 2009 CRCT. Coach Gibson took this student out of the classroom, talked with him, and brought him back. That student had very high WTR erasures.

She recalled a student who could not read or even write her name. This student had substantial WTR erasures on the math section of her test.

13. Harold Lovett (Teacher)

Harold Lovett's eighth graders read on a fourth to fifth grade level on the 2009 CRCT. He noticed that seals were broken on one or two of the CRCT booklets. He never reported this to anyone because he thought a student had possibly done it. Lovett explained the high number of erasures in his classroom as someone other than himself changing answers and altering tests.

14. Jerry Willard (Teacher)

Jerry Willard said Green had both key card and alarm code access to the building. Willard arrived at school around 6:30 a.m. each morning. He would have to wait to be let into the building by Green, who used her key card and alarm code to access the building.

Willard believed Principal Milstead left because he would not do something that Cotman asked him to do with regard to the CRCT.

15. Elbert Edwards (Teacher)

Elbert Edwards believed cheating occurred at Harper Archer. He did not believe Testing Coordinator Mary Brooks was involved in changing any answers. He described Brooks as a “stickler” about procedure. Edwards routinely worked late and sometimes did not leave until 8:00 p.m. SRT-4 personnel would still be in the building. Edwards suspected these SRT employees, especially Cotman, altered students’ tests. He did not suspect Assistant Principal Sublett or Principal Milstead of anything unethical.

16. Sheila Brown (Teacher)

During the 2009 CRCT, one of the janitors, Joie Phillips, approached Sheila Brown the day after the math section of the CRCT was given to the students. Phillips said that the students had done well on the CRCT. Brown asked Phillips how he knew that since there was no way anyone should already know how the students had performed. Phillips told Brown that he overheard some SRT-4 employees talking about it.

Brown denied doing anything to prompt her students to change answers. Brown did not notice her students erasing excessively during the test.

Brown was not shocked when she found out that Harper Archer was one of the flagged schools. Teachers complained about students who passed the CRCT that year who should never have passed the examination.

Brown recalled one specific student in her class who was a special education student, but exceeded on the math section of the CRCT. This student could not read.

There was discussion that the SRT-4 model teacher leaders and Cotman erased answers on the tests. Brown does not believe that St. Cyr would cheat, but Green and Testing Coordinator Brooks were very close. Green often worked late at the school.

17. Alana Allen (Teacher)

Alana Allen reported that she was surprised by the high 2009 CRCT scores of other teachers. Allen recalled several students who she did not feel could pass the CRCT, including one special education student, but who exceeded standards on the CRCT. The special education students’ scores were higher than some of the students who were known to perform well on the test. One of the math teachers, Mr. Leftwich, complained that one of his students fell asleep during testing, yet he achieved very high test scores. Leftwich could not understand how this could happen.

Allen and Leftwich knew something was wrong with the test scores when they assessed the eighth grade math test scores at the school. Allen taught the students at Harper Archer who were the lowest performing students in the eighth grade. Students on Leftwich’s team scored similarly to Allen’s students on benchmark tests, but on the CRCT performed exceptionally well.

Harper Archer teachers believe that the SRT-4 employees, including SRT Executive Director Tamara Cotman, were responsible for the erasures. It was obvious to the teachers that

something had gone wrong. Cotman said that the students in the school had to pass the test or the school was going to close and no one would have a job. Allen and other teachers at the school believed Principal Milstead was forced to resign because he would not do the things that Cotman wanted him to do.

18. Katie Reichenbach (Teacher)

When the spring 2009 CRCT scores were announced, many of the teachers were surprised at the scores and concerned that somebody within Harper Archer's administration cheated. Teachers acknowledged that the math scores were "not real." Reichenbach believed ILS Sharon Green was under a lot of pressure to improve scores. Green said that they needed to get the test scores up so "these people [SRT-4] will get off of our backs."

Reichenbach believed that Principal Milstead was forced out because Tamara Cotman wanted him to cheat and he refused.

19. Shanequa Yates (Teacher)

Shanequa Yates recalled that when the 2009 CRCT scores came in everyone at the school was thrilled. However, when they looked over the test scores, something was not right. The scores for many of the students did not match up with what the teachers knew about them. Yates and her co-workers talked about their shock at the scores. All of the eighth grade teachers believed that Cotman and the SRT-4 model teacher leaders were responsible for the erasures.

20. Matthew Leftwich (Teacher)

Matthew Leftwich recalled that the teachers were excited when they first heard about the percentage of students who had passed the CRCT in the 2008-2009 school year. But when the teachers looked at individual student scores, the excitement disappeared. Leftwich knew that some of the students could not have scored as high as they had in math. Leftwich and the other teachers at Harper Archer knew someone altered the tests.

When the erasure analysis came out, Leftwich recalled APS employees saying students just erased a lot, especially at the middle school level. Leftwich never saw his students erasing. On average, any given student would erase less than four times per section on a standardized test like the CRCT.

The teachers believed the SRT employees were responsible for the erasures. Leftwich heard that some of the SRT-4 employees were overheard talking about how well the students performed on the math section of the CRCT before anyone knew how students actually performed.

21. Joie Phillips (Custodian)

Joie Phillips said ILS Sharon Green was the "boss" of Harper Archer and tried to run it as if she was in charge of Principal Milstead. Green did not report to work early, but often stayed late after school.

While changing a water jug in the SRT-4 office, Phillips overheard one female worker say that the students at Harper Archer were “doing good” on the CRCT. This comment was made during the week of testing. Phillips did not know who made the comment. Phillips told a couple of the teachers on the eighth grade hall. He believes one of those teachers was Sheila Brown.

22. Tatia Mobley (Teacher)

Tatia Mobley said that one day after the 2009 CRCT test, math coach Barbara Bienemy came to Leon Bowers’ classroom and said he did a great job. Bienemy stated, “Your kids did so good in math.” This occurred prior to the results of the CRCT tests being published to the teachers. When the CRCT results came out, the teachers felt that something was not right with the test scores. Mobley recalled that some students on her team slept during the CRCT, yet passed the test. Mobley recalled another student in her class who could not read, but passed the CRCT.

Mobley feels her students were cheated. Mobley said she did not cheat and did not prompt her students to change their answers.

23. Arn St. Cyr (Math Coach)

During the administration of the 2009 CRCT, Arn St. Cyr assisted ILS Sharon Green and Testing Coordinator Brooks with sorting and preparing the test materials for the teachers. He also administered the CRCT make-up examination in the media center. The tests were stored in the school vault. Only Principal Milstead and his secretary, Ms. Westbrook, had a key to the vault. St. Cyr believed Cotman had a key to the vault as well.

When the Harper Archer test scores came out, St. Cyr recalled Bienemy saying that the math scores were unusually high. The percentage of students meeting standards on the math section on the CRCT had jumped to around 50%. St. Cyr believed this was impossible. Principal Milstead was also suspicious of the scores, but he had already been forced to resign at the time the scores came in. St. Cyr believed that Principal Milstead had not improved CRCT scores quickly enough for Cotman, so she refused to renew his contract. Principal Milstead expressed to St. Cyr that he had not moved the school at the pace Cotman had expected.

St. Cyr said the Special Education sub-group and the math scores prevented Harper Archer from making AYP. St. Cyr expressed his desire for the cheating to end. According to him, the number of erasures at Harper Archer was “statistically impossible. Not improbable, but impossible.”

24. Travis Jones (Special Education Teacher)

Travis Jones denied he prompted his students during testing or erased any of his students’ answers. Jones believed that SRT-4 employees had something to do with the erasures. According to Jones, if an employee had integrity, Cotman would get rid of them. If employees did not fit Cotman’s mold, she would find a way to get rid of them. Cotman was often seen with Special Education teacher Woods, ILS Sharon Green, SRO Veronica Campbell, and the

counselors. Jones did not believe that Principal Milstead would have had anything to do with cheating. He did not think the teachers had anything to do with cheating.

25. Barbara Bienemy (Math Coach)

When Barbara Bienemy arrived at Harper Archer in February 2009, she immediately noticed that students lacked basic math skills such as adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing, and the students were multiple grade levels behind. Based on the trend data, math and the special education population always prevented Harper Archer from making AYP. Bienemy believed that whoever was responsible for erasures had to be good in math and have access to the tests. Testing Coordinator Brooks and ILS Green were close, both were good in math, and both had access to the tests.

D. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Mary Brooks (Testing Coordinator)

Mary Brooks has worked at Harper Archer since 2006, when she was transferred from Turner Middle School by Executive Director Tamara Cotman. Brooks claimed that Principal Milstead did not speak with her and that she was not treated as fairly as her male counterparts. She described Milstead as a male chauvinist, although she had no knowledge of Milstead treating other females on the staff any differently. Nonetheless, Brooks admitted that Milstead did a “wonderful” job turning around Harper Archer, and he did a lot for the students.

Brooks denied any knowledge of cheating or participation in cheating. She did not suspect any teachers of cheating or assisting students on the CRCT. Brooks could not explain the high number of wrong-to-right erasures and did not know when they occurred. The testing team during the 2009 CRCT consisted of Jacquelyn King, Tanya Woods, math coaches St. Cyr and Bienemy, and ILS Green. Brooks stored the testing materials in crates in the school vault overnight. She obtained the key to the vault from the school secretary, Ms. Westbrook, and only had access to the vault during the testing week and following make up days. Brooks denied having unrestricted access to the school. Because SRT-4 is housed in the same building as Harper Archer, SRT-4 staff had their own entrance and could enter the Harper Archer school building from downstairs. During testing week, certain individuals from the central office came to Harper Archer, but she could only recall Lester McKee’s name from APS’s Research Planning and Assessment division. Model teacher leaders Diamond Jack and Tracey Colston were also present from SRT-4.

2. Sharon Green (ILS)

Green currently serves as the math and science instructional coach at Harper Archer.

During the 2008-2009 CRCT Mary Brooks served as the Testing Coordinator at Harper Archer. Jacquelyn King, the Success for All coach, St. Cyr, Bienemy, and Green assisted Brooks with testing. Several model teacher leaders from SRT-4 also assisted during testing: Diamond Jack, Nikki Stroud, and Tracey Colton. Green denied any knowledge of how the wrong-to-right erasures occurred. She was aware that Harper Archer struggled in multiple areas, but mostly math. Special education held Harper Archer back from attaining AYP. Green

acknowledged she did have key card access to the school but that the school had an alarm and the Principal and Assistant Principal had those codes. SRT personnel could also access Harper Archer from downstairs where the SRT office was located. Green had a close relationship with Brooks, and the instructional coaches.

E. Other Evidence

- The percentage of classes flagged for high WTR erasures dropped from 24.1% in 2009 to .7% in 2010.
- Correspondingly, the percentage of sixth grade students who met or exceeded standards in math dropped from 68% in 2009 to 34% in 2010, while the percentage of students who failed math skyrocketed from 32% in 2009 to 67% in 2010.
- The percentage of eighth grade math students who exceeded standards on the CRCT dropped from 31% in 2009 to 4% in 2010. Correspondingly, the percentage of students who failed increased from 18% to 33% in 2010.
- Some of the students identified by teachers as students who should not have passed the CRCT, who slept through the test, or who could not read, had the highest numbers of wrong-to-right erasures.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

We conclude that cheating occurred at Harper Archer through the erasing and changing of student answers. The statistical data from the erasure analysis, student data, and a review of score drops in 2010 reveal patterns similar to those seen in schools where teachers or administrators confessed to erasing and changing answers. We cannot conclude who erased and changed the students' answers at Harper Archer. ILS Green, Testing Coordinator Brooks and SRT-4 personnel, including Model Teacher Leaders Diamond Jack and Tamara Cotman, had access to the tests. Almost unanimously, the teachers pointed to Green, Brooks and the SRT-4 personnel.

Virtually every teacher acknowledged that someone altered the answers on the students' tests, particularly in math. It is well known that Harper Archer struggled in math and special education. Only math and special education classes were flagged. Green has a math background, and Diamond Jack is the Model Teacher Leader for math. Cotman put incredible pressure on Milstead and Green to get the scores up and meet AYP, and Green feared she would lose her job if the scores in math did not improve. Green had a close relationship with Testing Coordinator Brooks, who had access to the tests. According to Milstead, Cotman non-renewed him after he suggested in a principals' meeting that students' CRCT scores from elementary school did not reflect their academic abilities in the classroom. Cotman made it clear that Milstead should improve student scores by any means necessary.

Student data also indicated that someone in administration or SRT-4 cheated. Some of the lowest performing students had the highest number of erasures and achieved the highest

scores on the test. These low performing students were well known to the administrators, since teachers had been required to turn in "projection sheets" listing each student's expected performance just a few weeks before the test. Some testimony indicates this was the first time the teachers were required to turn the projection sheets over to the administration.

We conclude that cheating occurred at Harper Archer, but we are unable to determine who cheated. We conclude that Principal Milstead did not cheat, condone cheating, or know of cheating. Milstead may have been forced out of his position by Tamara Cotman because of his refusal to condone cheating.

M. AGNES JONES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

1040 Fair Street South
Atlanta, Georgia 30314

Principal: Margul Retha Woolfolk
Testing Coordinator: Andrea Johnson Lewis

SRT-1 Executive Director: Dr. Sharon Davis-Williams

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at M. Agnes Jones Elementary in 2009 and in other years. Twenty-five people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Six people confessed to cheating on the CRCT. Cheating at M. Agnes Jones is evidenced by confessions and witness testimony.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	23.1	7.8
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	18	7
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	11(4)	6(1)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	5.3	3.8
High Flagged Standard Deviation	9.5	5.6
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.1	3.1

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Narrative

Andrea Lewis was the testing coordinator in 2009. She was assisted by Gwendolyn Alston, Sedric Scott, and Petrina Howard. Sedric Scott denied any knowledge of cheating until he took and failed a polygraph examination. After failing the polygraph examination, he admitted to erasing and changing students' CRCT answer sheets and to prompting students to change incorrect answers.

Several teachers confessed to cheating on the 2009 CRCT, and some described students whose skills and abilities did not correspond to their high CRCT scores. Many witnesses heard that teachers prompted their students to erase and change answers during the 2009 CRCT, and in other years. Curtis Gale, who confessed to prompting students and erasing and changing answers on the 2009 CRCT, testified that he feared he would be terminated if his scores did not improve.

B. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Ann Hill (Teacher)

Ann Hill testified that the skills and abilities of her second grade students did not match their first grade CRCT scores. She heard that Curtis Gale only read two answer choices to his first grade students.

Former Principal Eunice Robinson threatened teachers with PDPs if they failed to raise CRCT scores, stating if she were placed on a PDP, teachers would also be placed on PDPs.

2. Demetrius Barnes (Teacher)

Demetrius Barnes testified that the skills and abilities of his second grade students did not match their first grade CRCT scores. Curtis Gale only read two answer choices to his first grade students.

In 2006, Demetrius Barnes was placed on a team with Corliss Love and Precious Moon. When the three were working late, Love and Moon suggested they open the vault and look at testing materials. Barnes could not recall if this was during the administration of the CRCT or a state writing test. Barnes refused to participate and threatened to “go over the principal’s head” if anyone looked at the testing materials.

Love and Moon had copies of the Fifth Grade Writing Test before it was administered. Barnes heard that they knew the prompt for the writing test “word for word,” well in advance of the test.

After threatening to “go over the principal’s head,” and report Love and Moon’s plan to get into the vault, Barnes began receiving poor evaluations and was moved from the upper grades to the lower grades.

3. Haneefa Rasheed (Teacher)

Haneefa Rasheed testified that the skills and abilities of her second grade students did not match their high first grade CRCT scores.

4. Erica Franklin (Teacher)

Erica Franklin testified that the skills and abilities of her second grade students did not match their high first grade CRCT scores. She heard that Curtis Gale only read two answer choices to his first grade students.

5. Ginneen Smith (Teacher)

Former Principal Robinson told teachers that if a certain number of students did not pass the CRCT, the teachers would be placed on a PDP. Ginneen Smith heard that Curtis Gale only read two answer choices to his first grade students.

6. Chelsea Vines (Teacher)

Chelsea Vines testified that former Principal Robinson threatened teachers with PDPs if they failed to raise CRCT scores, stating if she were placed on a PDP, teachers would also be placed on PDPs. She too heard that Curtis Gale only read two answer choices to his first grade students.

Vines heard that Precious Moon instructed her students to mark their CRCT answers in the testing booklet and not on the answer sheet. This allowed her to check student answers and instruct them to change incorrect answers and avoid wrong-to-right erasures.

7. Ovella Roberts (Teacher)

On the 2006 ITBS test, Sedric Scott told Roberts that she could tell students “something was wrong” with a particular question if she noticed they answered it incorrectly.

Former Principal Robinson told teachers that if a certain number of students did not pass the CRCT then the teachers would be placed on a PDP.

8. Stephanie Englert (Teacher)

Stephanie Englert admitted to prompting her students to change their answers during the administration of the 2009 CRCT.

In 2003, Gwendolyn Alston had a copy of that year’s CRCT, and showed it to Englert and others.

During the administration of the 2009 CRCT, a student told Englert that his former teacher, Idalina Couto, told students they answered a question incorrectly on the 2008 CRCT by “popping them in the head.”

During the week of CRCT testing in 2009, while Englert was working late, a paraprofessional asked if she could borrow some erasers for Judy Walker and Nneka Reynolds. Englert reported that it was unusual for Walker and Reynolds to work on anything without her because they were teammates. Reynolds rarely worked late, and the fourth grade students performed better on the CRCT than she expected in 2009.

9. Ayana Townsend (Teacher)

Ayana Townsend reported that she did not administer the reading section of the 2009 CRCT (for which she was flagged) because she was out of town. Several of her students asked for help on the 2009 CRCT and acted confused when she did not provide assistance.

Townsend heard that the first grade teachers cheated on the 2009 CRCT. She also testified that the skills and abilities of her fourth grade students did not match their high third grade CRCT scores.

Principal Woolfolk threatened to place teachers on PDPs if their CRCT scores did not improve. She had been directed by “her boss” to do so.

10. Dorris Freeman (Substitute)

Dorris Freeman administered the 2009 CRCT Reading section to Ayana Townsend’s students. Freeman had no knowledge of cheating, and stated that she would have no motivation

to change answers on the 2009 CRCT because she only substituted for Englert for one day of testing.

11. Idalina Couto (Teacher)

Idalina Couto admitted to prompting students to re-read a question when the student answered the question incorrectly on the 2009 CRCT. She also admitted to re-wording or explaining questions that students could not understand.

Couto said that Curtis Gale prompted his students or only read two answer choices when administering the CRCT.

12. Stephanie Bagley (Teacher)

Stephanie Bagley could provide no explanation for the high number of wrong-to-right erasures in her classroom. She believed "the administrators" may have erased and changed answer sheets.

13. Rose Logan (Teacher)

Rose Logan admitted to erasing student answers when the student selected two answers for a particular question. Logan also admitted that she filled in the correct answer on students' answer sheets when students failed to answer a question on the 2009 CRCT. She felt pressure to increase her CRCT scores. Because she was close to retirement, she did what she was required to do to keep her job. Logan says that she never actually changed any student's answer on the 2009 CRCT.

C. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Precious Moon (Teacher)

Precious Moon could provide no explanation for the high number of wrong-to-right erasures in her classroom. She described a previous OIR investigation regarding her giving answers to a student during a previous CRCT. Moon stated she was investigated and cleared by OIR.

2. Corliss Love (Teacher)

Corliss Love admitted to prompting students to change their answers on the 2009 CRCT. She now realizes her prompting was a testing violation.

3. Curtis Gale (Teacher)

Curtis Gale admitted to prompting his students to change answers during the administration of the 2009 CRCT, and in other years, by using voice inflection. Gale also admitted that he only read two answer choices, omitting the third. Gale further admitted that in 2009 and other years, when his students completed their tests, he would scan the tests and erase and change wrong answers.

Gale erased and changed answers in the conference room when the tests were returned during the time teachers were supposed to be cleaning up "stray marks" on the CRCT. Gale erased and changed answers when other teachers and the testing coordinator were present. Gale did not see any other teacher erase or change answers during the stray mark cleaning session, but was focused on his own tests.

Gale prompted his students and erased and changed their answer sheets because he felt pressure from former Principal Robinson and current Principal Woolfolk to improve his CRCT scores. He feared he would lose his job if his CRCT scores did not improve.

4. Sedric Scott (Math Coach)

Sedric Scott originally denied any knowledge of cheating. After he took and failed a polygraph examination, however, he confessed to erasing and changing answers on students' CRCT answer sheets, and to prompting students to change incorrect answers on the CRCT. Scott showed signs of deception by responding negatively to three questions during his polygraph examination: Have you ever instructed anyone to change any answers on a CRCT? Have you ever personally changed any answer on a CRCT? Have you ever knowingly allowed anyone to change an answer on the CRCT?

5. Andrea Johnson Lewis (Testing Coordinator)

Andrea Lewis stated that Gwendolyn Alston, Sedric Scott, and Petrina Howard assisted her during the 2009 CRCT. Alston and Howard passed out, and accepted the return of, CRCT materials for the first and second grades. Lewis and Scott passed out, and accepted the return of, CRCT materials for the third, fourth, and fifth grades. The two teams sat in separate conference rooms. The tests were stored in the principal's office after they were returned by the teachers. No teachers picked up their tests early or turned them in late. While former Principal Robinson allowed teachers to erase stray marks together in a conference room, Principal Woolfolk would not.

Only Principal Woolfolk and her secretary, Kandis Hendrix, had a key to the principal's office.

6. Margul Retha Woolfolk (Principal)

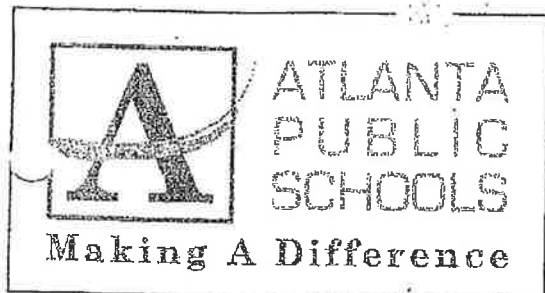
Principal Woolfolk had no knowledge of cheating on the 2009 CRCT. She received one report of a teacher cheating, but that teacher was cleared after an APS investigation. The parent of a student reported that Precious Moon assisted her students on the 2009 CRCT. Principal Woolfolk immediately mailed a letter to Lester McKee informing him of the allegation against Moon. A copy of that letter is included as **Attachment A**.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

We conclude that Curtis Gale, Corliss Love, Precious Moon, Sedric Scott, Idalina Couto and Rose Logan cheated on the CRCT in 2009 and in other years.

Based on the statistical evidence and the evidence we have found at schools with similar statistical data, we believe that other flagged teachers also cheated, but we lack sufficient evidence to determine which additional teachers cheated.

We do not believe that Principal Woolfolk condoned or knew of cheating at M. Agnes Jones. The only time cheating was reported to her, she immediately alerted OIR and Lester McKee.



MARGUL RETHA WOOLFOLK

PRINCIPAL

M. AGNES JONES ELEMENTARY

1040 FAIR STREET, SW

ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30314

PHONE (404) 802-3900

FAX (404) 752-5655

May 21, 2009

Mr. Lester McKee,

I would like to inform you of a complaint that I received from Ms. Montgomery-Dent, the mother of Kayla Dent, on Thursday, May 21, 2009 at approximately 2:00 p.m. Ms. Montgomery-Dent alleged the following against her child's 5th grade teacher, Mrs.

Precious Moon:

- Students were given answers by the teacher on the CRCT
- A student was advised to change his answer on the test
- Students were told to bubble anything on the science portion of the test and she would change the answers later

Due to the severity of these allegations, I felt it necessary to report the matter to you immediately as well as the Office of Internal Resolutions.

Ms. Montgomery Dent's phone number is 1-216-374-7130

Sincerely,

Margul Retha Woolfolk

Margul Retha Woolfolk

Principal

Cc: Dr. Sharon Davis-Williams

Ms. Colinda Howard

10-0110-25-11

EXHIBIT _____

PARKSIDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

685 Mercer St.
Atlanta, Georgia 30312

Principal: Dr. Phillip Luck
Testing Coordinator: Clementine Shanks

SRT-3 Executive Director: Dr. Gloria Patterson

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Parkside Elementary in 2009. Sixteen people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Three teachers confessed to cheating. Cheating at Parkside is evidenced by confessions.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	21.3	4.3
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	16	3
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	7(5)	3(0)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	6.1	4
High Flagged Standard Deviation	9.5	4.9
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.2	3.3

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Selena Wyatt (Teacher)

Selena Wyatt confessed to prompting students to change their answers. If Wyatt felt like the students were not focusing or were getting obvious questions wrong, she said "listen again" and she re-read the question. She often saw students erase their answers when she did this. Wyatt only did this on the math section of the test.

2. Pelita Johnson Meredith (Teacher)

Pelita Johnson Meredith taught third grade in 2009 and confessed to prompting her students when they answered incorrectly. As Meredith walked around monitoring her class, if she noticed they had an incorrect answer, she pointed to the test question. Her students understood that they needed to erase that particular answer. She did not tell them the correct answer.

Meredith sometimes questioned the validity of students' CRCT scores when they transferred to Parkside from another school. Transfer students' test scores often did not match their ability in the classroom. She specifically identified students from Deerwood Academy.

3. Terance Shipman (Teacher)

Terance Shipman taught second grade in 2009 and confessed to prompting students during the CRCT. If he noticed a student answered a question incorrectly he sometimes reminded them to go back and review the question. Shipman never gave the students the answers. Shipman discussed various ways to prompt students with teachers Selena Wyatt and Tamara Sparks.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

We conclude that Selena Wyatt, Pelita Meredith, and Terance Shipman cheated on the 2009 CRCT by prompting their students to change answers during the administration of the 2009 CRCT. Principal Phillip Luck did not know of the cheating at Parkside Elementary.

BETHUNE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

220 Northside Drive
Atlanta, Georgia 30314

Principal: RoseMary Hamer
Testing Coordinator: Aretha Ragland

SRT-4 Executive Director: Tamara Cotman

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Bethune Elementary in 2009. Thirty people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Two teachers confessed to cheating. Cheating is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms, confessions and witness testimony. Principal RoseMary Hamer failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	23.1	3.3
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	18	2
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	13(4)	1
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	4.2	5.6
High Flagged Standard Deviation	6.8	7
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.1	4.3

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Narrative

One teacher confessed to prompting students by reading questions a third time and rephrasing them to assist her students' comprehension. A second teacher confessed to prompting her students by reading questions a third time if they missed the question or fell behind.

Bethune met AYP consistently for years, but the percentage of students meeting and exceeding standards steadily dropped. Principal RoseMary Hamer was under constant scrutiny and pressure from her SRT Director to meet district targets. As a result, pressure was passed down to the teachers. One teacher described it as "a culture of pressure" to meet targets.

B. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Angela Gardner (Teacher)

Angela Gardner admitted to cheating on the 2009 CRCT by prompting students during testing. Gardner walked around the class and if she noticed that several students had missed the same question she would go to the front of the class and read the question a third time. She sometimes rephrased the question. As a result of her actions, many of Gardner's students erased and changed their answers from wrong to right.

2. Holly Thomas (Teacher)

Holly Thomas was a special education teacher for kindergarten and first grade in 2009. Thomas admitted to causing the students to erase and change their answers from wrong to right. During the 2009 CRCT, Thomas administered the test to eight special education students. All eight passed the test. If she noticed students worked ahead, she would make them erase the answers and only select answers after she read them the question. If she noticed that a student had fallen behind, she would read the question to the student a third time. If she noticed, while walking around the classroom, that a number of students had missed a question then she would read it a third time.

Thomas had two particularly bright students who would sometimes shout out the answers to the test questions. The other students knew those two were bright and would erase and change their answers to what was shouted out. Thomas said that happened “a lot.” A third child was particularly good at math and he only shouted out answers during the math section.

There was a culture of pressure on the teachers. Principal Hamer never said or did anything inappropriate as far as putting pressure on teachers but if a teacher’s class did not do well it reflected badly on the teacher.

3. Sandra Wilson (Teacher)

Sandra Wilson was a third grade teacher in 2009. She denied cheating. She resigned from Bethune due to harassment from Principal Hamer about low test scores on the 2009 CRCT. Her students were performing below grade level when they were assigned to her class. Principal Hamer told Wilson she “needed to do whatever she had to do to make sure the kids were going to pass.” She was never explicitly told to cheat, but the message was clear to her. Others on the third grade level conveyed similar messages. She was frustrated and told them she was not going to cheat. She knew she had the lowest test scores in the school but her students did the best they could. Wilson said she did not cheat and was ostracized at the school.

When questioned about specific students with improbable wrong-to-right erasures on the math section, Wilson was shocked. One child, who had ten out of 11 erasures changed from wrong to right, was identified as a special education student who Wilson did not believe erased at all. She recalled that he had emotional issues and just “shut down,” and probably did not finish the test. Another student, who had five out of five erasures changed from wrong to right, was also a special education student who Wilson believed could not have made those erasures. Wilson tested both students with the entire class; they were not pulled out for separate testing. Wilson said about half of her third grade class performed at a kindergarten level and could barely read.

Principal Hamer “hammered” the teachers about test scores in meetings. She grilled them about their scores on the benchmark tests which Wilson recalled were “awful, just awful . . . really terrible.” By the time they took the CRCT, everyone’s scores suddenly improved except Wilson’s, which remained just as they were on the diagnostic tests. Some of the teachers on her grade level had students that performed as poorly as Wilson’s, yet passed the CRCT. Wilson felt certain that she was the only teacher who had valid scores, and she suspected

cheating but had no proof. Principal Hamer “called her out” in front of everyone because of her test scores. Wilson said that “if you didn’t dance their dance and do what they want you to do, whether it was right or wrong—they didn’t like you and they would try to harass and intimidate you.”

Money was a motivation for doing well. Wilson heard Principal Hamer say that she knew they were looking forward to getting their check and she (Hamer) was looking forward to getting hers too. Wilson was not surprised to learn that APS was being investigated for cheating. She felt there were well-qualified teachers at Bethune but their focus was not on the children.

4. Alexandra Pajak (Teacher)

Alexandra Pajak was a program coordinator at Bethune in 2009. She was assigned to Bethune through a program called Community in Schools. Her responsibility was to monitor attendance. Pajak left Bethune because the work environment was “toxic.” Pajak gave investigators a document she had prepared for the interview. A copy of the document is included as **Attachment A**. The document includes the following information:

- a. Principal Hamer told the teachers at a staff meeting in November 2010 that the GBI would be coming to interview them, that they would have a gun in their pocket, that they would try to intimidate them at their interview, and that teachers could choose what to tell them.
- b. In September 2010, administrative assistant Djuana Edmond told Pajak, “It wasn’t the teachers that cheated at this school. The administration really dodged a bullet [during first round of interviews]. I didn’t cheat and they’re not interviewing me, so I’m not saying anything.”
- c. On May 5, 2010, Principal Hamer withdrew students who missed ten or more days of school in order to meet APS attendance targets, and allowed students who lived outside of the zone to remain at school as long as their test scores and attendance were strong.

5. Aretha Ragland (Assistant Principal & Testing Coordinator)

Aretha Ragland was the assistant principal and testing coordinator in 2009. She had no information or knowledge of testing improprieties.

6. Brenda Rattler (Teacher)

Brenda Rattler was surprised over the years by children she believed would not perform well. She attributed their unexpected success to them “taking their time.”

7. Charice Coston (Teacher)

Charice Coston was a fifth grade teacher in 2009. She was on maternity leave during the 2008-2009 school year and was not present to administer the 2009 CRCT to her class.

8. Lisa Stanley (Teacher)

Stanley was a second grade teacher in 2009. She denied cheating or knowledge of cheating. Stanley said she never erased anything on her students' tests, not even stray marks. At no time have teachers erased stray marks. They tell their students to erase them. Stanley recalled that she had four or five students in 2009 who received extra tutoring from Traci Walker, a special education teacher. She believed those students may have been tested separately by other teachers.

C. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. RoseMary Hamer (Principal)

RoseMary Hamer was the principal of Bethune in 2009. She stated that the school has met AYP for so many years that although they did not technically meet AYP in 2010, Bethune was "deemed" to have met AYP "by confidence." Principal Hamer attributed the drop in flagged classes in 2010 to the students being afraid to erase. She has been principal of Bethune for ten years, and has met the district targets only a few times. Last year she was placed on a PDP by SRT-4 Executive Director Sharon Davis-Williams for low test scores, which she felt was unfair. Principal Hamer said she wanted to make targets, but did not feel pressure to do so. Asked if the teachers felt pressure about meeting targets, Principal Hamer said they "probably" did.

The tests were locked in the vault to which only she, the secretary and Testing Coordinator Aretha Ragland had a key. Teachers could collect their tests between 7:30 and 8:00 a.m. The tests were passed out and collected in the media center. Principal Hamer said they did not erase stray marks. She was not aware of any cheating allegations at Bethune, but was confident that any allegations that were reported would be thoroughly investigated by APS. She was not aware of students shouting out answers in class during 2009 testing. She would be surprised to learn that teachers at Bethune admitted to cheating.

Regarding former teacher Sandra Wilson, Principal Hamer stated that Wilson was at Bethune for one year and was not a great teacher. Hamer thought that Wilson's students were not progressing at the pace they should have been. Principal Hamer felt that her third grade teachers were not a "solid group of teachers" in 2009. She would not have wanted Wilson to remain on the third grade level.

D. Other Evidence

- In 2007-2008 and 2008-2009, Bethune met AYP.
- In 2009-2010, Bethune met AYP. The school's status dropped from "Distinguished" to "Adequate." The percentage of students not meeting standards increased by 6%.

- In 2010, teachers did not gather to erase stray marks as they had in prior years.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

We conclude that cheating occurred on the 2009 CRCT at Bethune. Angela Gardner encouraged her second grade students to erase and change answers from wrong to right by rephrasing questions or reading them a third time. Holly Thomas prompted her special education students by reading questions a third time if several had missed the question or fell behind.

Principal Hamer pressured teachers to “do what you need to do” to raise the test scores. She created an atmosphere where teachers felt it was necessary to cheat. Principal RoseMary Hamer failed in her ultimate responsibility for testing activities and for ensuring the ethical administration of, and proper securing for the 2009 CRCT. It is our conclusion, from the statistical data and the other evidence, that Principal Hamer failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT, and adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and she is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

Alexandra Pajak
Interview, April 5, 2011
Documentation

Directly Related to CRCT

-On November 23, 2010 Principal RoseMary Hamer called a staff meeting in the media center at Bethune Elementary School. She told staff members, "The GBI will be coming to the school. They'll walking like this with their arm over their pocket [demonstrated walking with arm over pocket]. They'll have a gun in their pocket. They'll try to intimidate you when they interview you. And you can choose what to tell them."

-September 2010, Administrative Assistant Djuana Edmond told me, "It wasn't the teachers that cheated at this school. The administration really dodged a bullet [during first round of interviews]. I didn't cheat and they're not interviewing me, so I'm not saying anything."

-May 5, 2010: Principal withdraws students who miss 10 or more days of school to meet APS Attendance Target. Principal allows students to remain at the school if out of zone as long as their test scores and attendance are strong.

-Spring 2010 The day the CRCT tests arrived to Bethune, an Administrative Team Meeting was held (already scheduled on calendar) in the front office conference room. I presented my attendance data. The other people present (Principal RoseMary Hamer, Counselor Tamika Witcher, ILS staff member Stephanie Renfro, Reading Coach Melanie Searcy, and Success for All coach Alicia Walton) looked [in my opinion] very nervous and scared. When I finished with my data, Principal RoseMary Hamer said to me, "You can decide to stay or leave the meeting now." I left the meeting. The meeting (which usually lasted about an hour) lasted four hours that day.

Behavior of Administration

-January 6, 2010: While Principal out of the building, I was "mobbed" by administrative team. I was called into a meeting by ILS staff member Stephanie Renfro. The group of women began to shout at me, telling me if I did not do as they said (to take a lunch monitor slot the principal told me not to) they would tell the principal I'm not "a team player." I walked out of the meeting. I informed the principal of the situation on January 6, 2010 in the main hallway when she returned to the building. She rolled her eyes and said, "I don't want this drama," and walked away. I complained to my supervisor, who held a meeting with the principal on January 12, 2011: Ms. Renfro continued to shout at me, accusing me of shouting while in the meeting in which I was mobbed. Principal did not ask Ms. Renfro to lower her voice. The principal asked me (in my opinion, oddly),

10-0110-25-11

EXHIBIT _____

why I did not like the school counselor, Tamika Witcher. I told her that in Summer 2009 the counselor told a student who was seen by the school social worker for stab wounds, "I should put you on hotghettomess.com," after the student told her he had pet rotweilers at home. The principal then said, "That isn't leaving this room." (I had informed my then supervisor of the comment the day of the comment in 2009.)

-November 12, 2010 Principal RoseMary Hamer opened and shut the door halfway and I assumed it was a kid (I couldn't see anyone outside the little window part on the door, so I assumed it was a tiny kid that had trouble opening the door and would reopen it). The principal walked in and said, "You should have looked up. I could have been a sniper. You should be more careful" to the attendance clerk, Mr. Cabral Williams, and me.

-April 20, 2010 a fifth grader skipped school. Principal RoseMary Hamer told ILS staff member Ms. Stephanie Renfro that if the student tries to skip school, "Tell her [the student] will have the student handcuffed and taken away from the school in a police car."

-On September 29, 2011²⁰¹⁰ the Principal refused to give me space to store food after I told her I was asked not to write a press release for the Blessings in a Backpack program until Spring semester.

- September 29, 2011²⁰¹⁰ a parent came in with a yellow shirt that had pencil marks on it. The parent said two to three boys had thrown glass bottles at his daughter on the way home from school and that the pencil marks were where the boys stabbed her with a pencil. The principal did not suspend any of the students. Once the parent and students left the front office, the principal said, "I might call the police on them," referring to two brothers (one eight years old and another ten years old) to discipline them for throwing bottles and stabbing the girl with a pencil.

10-0110-25-11

EXHIBIT _____

MILES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

4215 Bakers Ferry Road, SW
Atlanta, Georgia 30331

Principal: Christopher Estes
Testing Coordinator: Shuanta Broadway

SRT-1 Executive Director: Dr. Sharon Davis-Williams

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Miles Elementary in 2009. Thirteen people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Two teachers confessed to cheating. Cheating at Miles is evidenced by confessions and witness testimony.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	21.7	2.9
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	13	2
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	6(5)	1(1)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	6.1	3.8
High Flagged Standard Deviation	9.8	4.4
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.3	3.1

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Rae Debose-Douglas (Teacher)

Rae Debose-Douglas recalled that teachers complained that their students' skills and abilities did not match their high scores on prior CRCT tests.

Testing Coordinator Shuanta Broadway once commented that she had to review each student's CRCT answer sheet to make sure they answered the majority of the questions.

2. Shondra Etheridge (Teacher)

Shondra Etheridge denied any knowledge of cheating, but admitted that based on the statistical data, someone tampered with her tests. She heard of teachers using voice inflection to prompt students.

3. Lillian Williams (Teacher)

Lillian Williams admitted that she prompted students using voice inflection, and that her voice inflection could have caused the high wrong-to-right erasures in her classroom on the 2009 CRCT.

4. Kiatonya Wormley (Teacher)

Kiatonya Wormley admitted that she erased the incorrect answer choice when students filled in one or more bubbles on the CRCT. She denied any further knowledge of cheating.

5. Sabrina Claude (Teacher)

Sabrina Claude heard that Debose-Douglas obtained a copy of the CRCT from another district, and used it to cheat on the 2009 CRCT.

Claude identified a student in her classroom in 2010 that told her Lillian Williams gave the student answers during the 2009 CRCT.

6. Temica Bell (Teacher)

Temica Bell taught the daughter of fellow teacher Lakeisha Davis. That student told Temica Bell that she recognized a reading passage on the 2009 CRCT because she had studied it the previous night. Lakeisha Davis was friends with Rae Debose-Douglas and Lori McAdoo, both flagged teachers on the 2009 CRCT.

7. Lakeisha Davis (Teacher)

Lakeisha Davis stated that her daughter studied a CRCT coaching book that Lakeisha Davis borrowed from Miles Elementary, and denied Temica Bell's assertion that the book was a copy of the 2009 CRCT.

Davis admitted to instructing her students to re-read a question when she noticed they had selected a wrong answer, and says this prompting could have accounted for the high number of wrong-to-right erasures in her classroom on the 2009 CRCT.

8. Lori McAdoo (Teacher)

Lori McAdoo denied all knowledge of cheating, and denied possessing a copy of the CRCT.

9. Shuanta Broadway (Testing Coordinator)

Shuanta Broadway testified that only Principal Estes and she had keys to the area where the tests were kept. The first and second grade teachers were permitted to clean stray marks from their testing materials, but the third, fourth, and fifth grade teachers were not. She denied telling Rae Debose-Douglas that she checked to make sure the students filled in the majority of their answers on their answer sheets. Broadway denied any knowledge of cheating on the 2009 CRCT or in any other year.

10. Christopher Estes (Principal)

Principal Estes denied any knowledge of cheating at Miles.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

We conclude that Lakeisha Davis, Kiatonya Wormley and Lillian Williams cheated on the 2009 CRCT. We also conclude that Principal Estes did not know cheating occurred on the 2009 CRCT.

GROVE PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

20 Evelyn Way
Atlanta, Georgia 30315

Principal: Caitlyn Sims
Testing Coordinator: Derick Brown

SRT-4 Executive Director: Tamara Cotman

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Grove Park Elementary in 2009. Seven people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Cheating at Grove Park is evidenced by two confessions and witness testimony.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	20	4.5
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	15	3
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	7(5)	3
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	8.5	3.9
High Flagged Standard Deviation	15.8	4.3
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.2	3.1

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Narrative

The weight of the evidence indicates that cheating occurred in classrooms by teachers. Two teachers confessed to prompting their students to erase and change their answers from wrong to right. First grade teacher Allison Tollman cheated by prompting her students through voice inflection and stressing key words when reading questions and answers, and by reading questions a third time. Fifth grade teacher Beverly Shanks prepared her students a week before testing to watch for her verbal and non-verbal cues during testing. If she noticed a student with a wrong answer, she would look away from the student and tell the class to check their answers.

We could not locate Testing Coordinator Derick Brown for an interview.

B. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Caitlyn Sims (Principal)

Caitlyn Sims' first year as principal at Grove Park was 2009. She had no explanation for the high wrong-to-right erasures in her school. Principal Sims feels that the target system at APS was very difficult and created a great deal of pressure and intimidation. She stated that instead of celebrating a school's accomplishments, APS constantly ranks and reminds schools of how "low" they are and that they didn't meet the targets. Additionally, principals are constantly reminded that evaluations are based on whether you make targets. She felt that targets were "statistically inappropriate" and that the system was like a house of cards.

Principal Sims was placed on a PDP by her SRT-4 Executive Director, Tamara Cotman. Principal Sims knew that she had not met her targets but was surprised by the PDP because she had received commendations in other areas. Cotman told her, "Based on your test scores, obviously you weren't really doing enough with your staff."

2. Allison Tollman (Teacher)

Allison Tollman admitted to cheating on the 2009 CRCT by prompting students and causing them to erase and change answers from wrong to right. Tollman also stated that she sometimes read the question a third time and stressed a portion of the question. She never gave students the correct answer. She believed that the high number of wrong-to-right erasures could have been caused by her voice inflection when she read the answer choices a third time.

Tollman stated that she felt pressure to improve her students' scores from the "system" and administration. She felt that the former principal, Dr. Paula Snowden, applied more pressure with respect to scores. Tollman added that teachers did not gather to erase stray marks in 2009 but had done so in previous years.

3. Beverly Shanks (Teacher)

Beverly Shanks was flagged in reading and math for high wrong-to-right erasures. Shanks confessed to cheating on the 2009 CRCT. She said that one week prior to the CRCT, she instructed her students that if she told them to check their answers during the test, they had a wrong answer and needed to review the question and answer choices again. She did not provide those instructions on test days because she was afraid of being overheard on the intercom. During the test, if she noticed an incorrect answer on a student's answer sheet, she would look away from the student and tell the class they needed to check their answers. She never directly told a student to check his or her answer. Shanks admitted she did this numerous times while the students were testing. She believed it would explain the high number of wrong-to-right erasures in her class.

She heard of others cheating on the CRCT by assisting students with answers and erasing and changing answers on student tests.

4. Pamela Lewis (Teacher)

Pamela Lewis was flagged for high wrong-to-right erasures in all subjects. She denied cheating and knowledge of cheating. She did not know why her students had high numbers of wrong-to-right erasures because she did not see a lot of erasing. Lewis reported a testing irregularity in 2009. One student read and answered every question in the reading section of the test before Lewis read them aloud to the class. He filled in all of the answer choices for each question, so Lewis instructed him to go back and choose one answer per question.

5. Maya Moore (Teacher)

Maya Moore was flagged in all subjects for high wrong-to-right erasures. She stated that she read the question the first time in a monotone voice, but the second time she read the question she might add some inflection to her voice. Moore's interview was interrupted while

she administered a test. When the interview resumed, Moore recanted some of her statement. She said the first time she read the question in a normal tone. The second time she added some inflection to get the students to focus. She stated that she did not do that often on the CRCT. If re-reading the question caused students to change answers from wrong to right, it was not her intention. She felt that due to the high number of erasures, there may have been “outside help” as well as students looking at each other’s answers during the test. She did not believe her actions could have caused all the erasures in her class.

Moore added that she was close to the Testing Coordinator in 2009, Derick Brown, and thought he should be interviewed.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

We conclude that Allison Tollman and Beverly Shanks cheated by prompting their students during the administration of the 2009 CRCT. Principal Sims did not know of cheating at Grove Park.

JACKSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

1325 Mt. Paran Road
Atlanta, Georgia 30327

Principal: Dr. Lorraine Reich
Testing Coordinator: Jimmie Hawkins

SRT-4 Executive Director: Tamara Cotman

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Jackson Elementary in 2009. Jackson was not flagged for having classrooms with higher wrong-to-right erasures than the state mean. During the course of this investigation, however, we became aware of possible cheating at Jackson on the 2009 CRCT. Five people were interviewed at Jackson and two teachers confessed to cheating.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	3.7	6.3
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	4	7
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	3(1)	6(1)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	3.6	3.5
High Flagged Standard Deviation	4.8	4.2
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.1	3.1

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Ann Offen (Teacher)

Ann Offen admitted to prompting her students with voice inflection on the 2009 CRCT. She explained that her voice inflection was accidental because she read “dramatically” to her students all year long. She was “certain” that students “caught on to the way I inflect my voice.” She further admitted that if she noticed a student mark the same answer choice over and over she would direct that student to re-read the questions. She further testified that she was not surprised she was flagged, but she was embarrassed to be flagged.

2. Lori Dewberry (Teacher)

Lori Dewberry testified that she never prompted a student, never suggested they re-read a particular question, and never pointed to or suggested correct answers. Dewberry stated that if she saw a student mark the same answer choice over and over she did nothing. Dewberry stated that she may have unconsciously prompted her students to change answers on the 2009 CRCT. She explained that she read “dramatically” to her students throughout the school year, and may have accidentally used voice inflection when reading the correct answer choices during the 2009 CRCT.

3. Lorraine B. Reich (Principal)

Lorraine Rech denied any knowledge of cheating at Jackson.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

Of the three flagged teachers at Jackson, two admitted they “accidentally” used voice inflection when reading the answer choices to their students during the 2009 CRCT. We conclude that Ann Offen and Lori Dewberry cheated on the 2009 CRCT. We find that Principal Reich did not know of the cheating at Jackson.

CLEVELAND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

2672 Old Hapeville Road
Atlanta, Georgia 30315

Principal: Dr. Rhonda Ware-Brazier
Testing Coordinator: Lillian Jackson

SRT-2 Executive Director: Michael Pitts

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Cleveland Elementary School in 2009. Sixteen people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Cheating at Cleveland is evidenced by a confession.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	26.1	8.3
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	18	5
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	10(6)	3(2)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	6.0	4.2
High Flagged Standard Deviation	13.8	5.3
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.0	3.8

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Alvia Barnett (Teacher)

Alvia Barnett admitted to prompting students on the 2009 CRCT. Barnett said that if she noticed that a student answered a question incorrectly she told the student to go back and check the answer. She also rephrased an answer if she thought it was a word the student was not familiar with.

Barnett's proctor prompted students as well. She read the question again to individual students, even though Barnett had read the question twice. Barnett heard her proctor direct students to go back and check particular questions.

2. Dr. Rhonda Ware-Brazier (Principal)

Dr. Rhonda Ware-Brazier denied knowledge of cheating.

She brought in retired teachers to proctor during testing in 2009. The retired teachers erased stray marks on the answer sheets, but teachers did not.

3. Lillian Jackson (Testing Coordinator)

Lillian Jackson was the testing coordinator in 2009. She denied knowledge of cheating.

Jackson gave teachers an opportunity to erase stray marks for approximately five to ten minutes after testing.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

We conclude that Alvia Barnett cheated on the 2009 CRCT by prompting students to change their answers. Principal Ware-Brazier did not know of the cheating at this school.

ALONZO A. CRIM OPEN CAMPUS HIGH SCHOOL

256 Clifton Street
Atlanta, Georgia 30317

Principal: Dr. Angelisa Cummings
Testing Coordinator: Isabella Copridge

SRT-5 Executive Director: Joyce McCloud

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Alonzo A. Crim High School had one eighth grade class. Three sections of the CRCT were administered to this single class. One of those three sections was flagged, resulting in a 33% flag rate being assigned to the school. This overall percentage was sufficient to put Crim in the severe category under the state's analysis even though there was only a single flagged subject. That one flagged classroom did not justify investigating Crim given the scope of the larger investigation. No one was interviewed with respect to Crim.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	33.3	0
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	1	0
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	1	0
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	5.2	0
High Flagged Standard Deviation	5.2	0
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	5.2	0

III. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

There is insufficient evidence to make any conclusions.

BENJAMIN S. CARSON PREPARATORY ACADEMY

CLOSED

Principal: Flora Goolsby
Testing Coordinator: Nelta Lattimore

SRT-4 Executive Director: Tamara Cotman

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

There is only statistical evidence that cheating occurred on the CRCT at Benjamin S. Carson Preparatory Academy (Carson) in 2009. Twenty-one people were interviewed at this school, some more than once.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	30	N/A
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	9	N/A
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	5(3)	N/A
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	4.7	N/A
High Flagged Standard Deviation	9.4	N/A
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.1	N/A

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Narrative

In 2009, Carson contained about 125 eighth grade students. The sixth and seventh grades had been moved to the new BEST Academy and only the eighth grade remained on site at Carson. The school was a "Needs Improvement Year 8" school in its final year of existence. Principal Flora Goolsby was assigned to Carson to help close the school. A state monitor, Joel Standifer, was assigned to Carson on a full time basis. During administration of the CRCT, the tests were stored in Principal Goolsby's office, locked in a closet. The Testing Coordinator, Nelta Lattimore, distributed and collected the tests from a cart in the hallway. After testing, Lattimore said the tests were rolled back to Principal Goolsby's office. A witness claimed that the tests were rolled into Lattimore's office and returned to Principal Goolsby's office at the end of each day.

B. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Arthur Jones (Math Coach)

Arthur Jones taught at Benjamin Carson in 2009. He testified that he believes the school was flagged due to the test-taking strategies he taught. He stated that he told students that when there was not much time that they should mark "b" or "c" on the answer sheet and come back later and erase the answer if they had time to work through the problem and found that the answer was incorrect. Jones stated that some of the flagged teachers, specifically Ms. Shorter and

Charles Ball, would not have the knowledge to change math answers from wrong to right. He claimed no knowledge of cheating at Carson.

Arthur Jones stated that any sixth grade teacher at an APS middle school can tell you that there is cheating on the CRCT in APS elementary schools, and it is just accepted that the scores are inflated.

2. Charles Ball (Teacher)

Charles Ball testified that it was “common knowledge” that cheating occurred in the elementary schools. He stated that Arthur Jones sometimes referred to himself as “Top Gun” and claimed to be the best math teacher. Ball’s class was flagged at 6.6 for high wrong-to-right erasures on the math portion of the CRCT.

3. Jacqueline Middlebrooks (Proctor)

Jacqueline Middlebrooks proctored in Ms. Shorter’s classroom and testified that Ms. Shorter’s students were actually tested by a gifted teacher. Shorter’s classes were flagged in all three subject areas.

4. Mary Gordon (Teacher)

Mary Gordon, a former teacher, testified that having seen the test scores, there was no doubt there was cheating. She believed it could not have happened in the classroom due to lack of time and that some teachers did not know sufficient math to change the answers.

5. Nelta Lattimore (Testing Coordinator)

Nelta Lattimore testified that she was a counselor assigned as testing coordinator and was “scared to death” about anything going wrong with testing procedures. She stated that the tests were returned to a table in the hallway, then were placed on a cart that she rolled into Principal Flora Goolsby’s office. She believed only the principal had the key. Lattimore did not believe Principal Goolsby or other administrators would ever erase answers.

6. Joel Standifer (State Monitor)

Joel Standifer was assigned to Carson as a full time monitor for the 2008-2009 school year by the Georgia Department of Education because it was a “Needs Improvement Year 8” school. The tests were returned to a table in the hall. They were then rolled into Nelta Lattimore’s office and then later to the principal’s office and stored overnight. He only observed the first day of testing.

7. Marilyn Wallace (Secretary)

Marilyn Wallace was the principal’s secretary and testified that Nelta Lattimore brought the tests to the principal’s office around 3:30 or 4:00 p.m. She stated that if there was cheating on the tests it had to have happened while the tests were in Lattimore’s office.

8. Flora Goolsby (Principal)

Flora Goolsby was assigned to Carson during the 2008-2009 school year to oversee the closing of the school. The school was comprised of eighth grade only, with approximately 125 students. Many had extreme academic deficits or behavioral problems. She testified that the teachers flagged with high wrong-to-right erasures were among those she “inherited” when she was assigned to the school in 2008-2009. She stated that the tests were locked in her office.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

For the 2009 CRCT at Carson, 30% of the classes exceeded three standard deviations from the State mean for wrong-to-right erasures. Five teachers had classes exceeding three standard deviations. Although we have concerns, the evidence we observed does not warrant further action.

C.W. HILL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

CLOSED

Principal: Yolanda Brown
Testing Coordinator: Tracey Fletcher

SRT-1 Executive Director: Dr. Sharon Davis-Williams

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

There is limited statistical evidence that cheating occurred on the CRCT at C.W. Hill Elementary in 2009. Because C.W. Hill closed at the end of 2009, only one witness was interviewed at this school.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	29.4	N/A
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	15	N/A
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	7(4)	N/A
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	10.3	N/A
High Flagged Standard Deviation	25.1	N/A
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.7	N/A

III. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

For the 2009 CRCT at C.W. Hill, 29.4% of the classes exceeded three standard deviations from the State mean for wrong-to-right erasures. Fifteen teachers had classes exceeding three standard deviations. Although we have concerns, the evidence does not warrant further action.

ADAMSVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

286 Wilson Mill Road
Atlanta, Georgia 30331

Principal: Sharon Suitt
Testing Coordinator: Lucille Gourdine

SRT-1 Executive Director: Dr. Sharon Davis-Williams

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

There is limited statistical evidence that cheating occurred on the CRCT at Adamsville Elementary in 2009. Eleven people were interviewed at this school.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	27.8	1.9
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	20	1
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	10(7)	1(0)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	5.5	3.8
High Flagged Standard	9.7	3.8
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.2	3.8

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

For the 2009 CRCT at Adamsville, 27.8% of the classes exceeded three standard deviations from the state mean for wrong-to-right erasures. Ten teachers had 20 classes exceeding three standard deviations. In 2010, the percentages of classes with wrong-to-right erasures exceeding three standard deviations from the state mean dropped significantly from 27.8% to 1.9%. Although we have concerns, the evidence does not warrant further action.

CASCADE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

2326 Venetian Dr.
Atlanta, GA 30331

Principal: Dr. Alfonso L. Jessie, Jr.
Testing Coordinator: Barbara Ash

SRT-1 Executive Director: Dr. Sharon Davis-Williams

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

There is only limited statistical evidence that cheating occurred at Cascade Elementary in 2009. Fourteen people were interviewed at this school, some more than once.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	28.8	1.9
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	19	1
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	10(6)	1(0)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	5.2	3.3
High Flagged Standard Deviation	13.7	3.3
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.2	3.3

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Dr. Alfonso Jessie (Principal)

Dr. Alfonso Jessie said there is pressure from APS to make targets and improve test scores. SRT-1 Director Sharon Davis-Williams put Dr. Jessie on three PDPs when Cascade failed to meet targets. On occasion Davis-Williams would ask Dr. Jessie what he was going to do about a particular teacher whose students did not do well on the CRCT. Dr. Jessie testified that he has no knowledge of anyone at Cascade cheating on the CRCT.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

Due to the statistical evidence and the testimony of witnesses, we cannot determine what happened at Cascade. A number of teachers told investigators that there was no time limit within which they had to turn the tests in to the testing coordinator. It is possible that the teachers had time to prompt students or change answers in the classroom. No witnesses admitted to prompting students or changing answers. Although we have concerns, the evidence does not warrant further action.

HERITAGE ACADEMY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

3500 Villa Circle SE
Atlanta, Georgia 30354

Principal: Yvonne Bernal
Testing Coordinator: Meribell White

SRT-2 Executive Director: Michael Pitts

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

There is only limited statistical evidence that cheating occurred on the 2009 CRCT at Heritage Academy Elementary. Eighteen people were interviewed at this school.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	28.2	9.3
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	22	7
Number of Teachers Flagged fro WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	17(4)	7(2)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	5.5	6.3
High Flagged Standard Deviation	10.6	11.0
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.0	3.0

III. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

For the 2009 CRCT at Heritage Academy, 28.2% of the classes exceeded three standard deviations from the State mean for wrong-to-right erasures. Seventeen teachers had 22 classes exceeding three standard deviations. In 2010, the percentage of classes with wrong-to-right erasures exceeding three standard deviations from the State mean dropped from 28.2% to 9.3%. The evidence we observed does not warrant further action.

UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY ACADEMY

2050 Tiger Flowers Drive, NW
Atlanta, Georgia 30314

Principal: Dr. Jim Harris
Testing Coordinator: Tammy Miller

SRT-4 Executive Director: Tamara Cotman

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at University Community Academy (UCA) in 2009 and other years. Two people confessed to cheating. Cheating at UCA is evidenced by confessions and witness testimony. Twenty-six people were interviewed at UCA, some more than once. Principal Jim Harris failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	25	4.2
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	5	3
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	4(1)	3(0)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	8.3	3.6
High Flagged Standard Deviation	13.9	4.3
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.3	3.2

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Narrative

Cheating occurred at UCA during CRCT testing in 2008 and 2009. One teacher confessed to cheating in 2009 during CRCT testing. When students raised their hands during testing, she provided answers. Her proctor was present but was reportedly unaware of the teacher's actions. Three proctors said teachers for whom they proctored cheated. Melvin McClain circulated among the lower achieving students in his class during 2008 and 2009 testing, and read off a series of answers for the students. Haron Wood confessed that he also provided answers for McClain's students.

Wanda Nevett was implicated by two of her proctors for cheating.

Wanda Williams was implicated by her proctor and other witnesses for cheating during 2009 CRCT testing. Williams would go to students who raised their hand and provide answers.

B. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Christine Clyne (Teacher)

Christine Clyne confessed to cheating on the CRCT in 2009. Clyne admitted to cheating by providing students with answers during testing. She said she gave answers to students who raised their hands. Her proctor was unaware of what she was doing. Clyne was unaware of

anyone else in the school engaging in similar behavior. A combination of personal pressure and pressure from Principal Harris may have motivated her actions. She was accused of testing improprieties while teaching at another school several years ago.

2. Dr. Jim Harris (Principal)

Dr. Jim Harris was the Principal of UCA in 2009. Principal Harris denied knowledge of cheating. Although he had a statistics background and understood the meaning of high standard deviations, he refused to believe that cheating could account for the high erasures at UCA. Principal Harris appeared surprised when shown the names of the flagged teachers, many of whom he had recruited from other schools. He admitted hiring Clyne despite knowledge of previous allegations of cheating made against her at another school. He denied putting pressure on teachers. When informed that some had made confessions and implicated others, Principal Harris refused to believe that cheating was possible because testing procedures were tight. He claimed he personally went from room to room monitoring the school during testing.

3. Haron Wood (Proctor)

Haron Wood proctored for Melvin McClain in 2009 and for a few days in 2008. Wood testified that during 2008 and 2009 CRCT testing in McClain's sixth grade class, McClain would walk around the class and "blatantly" provide answers to the students. Wood stated that McClain would stand over particular students, instruct them to write quickly and read them a series of 10 to 15 answers. Some students had already filled in wrong answers, which they erased and changed to the right answers provided by McClain. Other students left questions unanswered and waited for McClain to come over and provide answers. McClain had materials in hand to assist him in providing answers. McClain focused on the lower achieving students and left the higher performing students alone.

Wood admitted to providing some students with answers during testing in McClain's class during CRCT testing.

Wood said he also proctored for Wanda Nevett during 2008 CRCT testing. He said that in 2008 Nevett cheated by using voice inflection to give her students answers. Wanda Nevett would also walk around and "abruptly" inform students when they had missed a question and provide the correct answer. If a student was taking too long to fill in an answer, Nevett would tell the child, "What is taking so long, the answer is ____."

4. Rhonda Smith (Proctor)

Rhonda Smith worked as a lunchroom assistant and served as a proctor for Wanda Williams in 2009. Smith stated that Williams went to students who raised their hands during CRCT testing and gave them the answer. Smith could hear Williams providing answers. Students sometimes asked Smith for the answers, but because it was sixth grade and she was unsure of the correct answer, she would summon Williams over to the student, and Williams provided the student with the answer. Smith observed that Williams had papers in her desk drawer that she appeared to be referencing. Smith said she knew there were different versions of the test and did not know how Williams had access to the correct information.

5. MeiTei Smith (Proctor)

MeiTei Smith was a proctor for Wanda Nevett in 2009. Smith stated that during the 2009 CRCT, Nevett walked around the classroom and erased on students' test books as she administered the test. Smith was uncertain whether Nevett was erasing answers. Nevett walked around the room pointing at students' test books, but Smith was not certain if Nevett was prompting them to change their answers. Nevett used voice inflection when reading answer choices. Nevett read the questions more than twice which Smith knew to be a testing violation.

6. Tammy Miller (Testing Coordinator)

Tammy Miller was the Testing Coordinator in 2009. She denied any knowledge of cheating.

7. Shirley Shivers (Tutor & Proctor)

Shirley Shivers was a tutor and proctor in 2009. A proctor or monitor told Shivers that Wanda Williams' classroom door was locked during the CRCT. Students said that Wanda Williams and Melvin McClain provided answers during testing. Shivers said that if cheating occurred, it would have taken place in the classroom.

8. Kimberly Lucas (Teacher)

Students told Kimberly Lucas that Wanda Williams cheated by using coughing as a signal. Williams coughed a certain number of times to indicate the correct answer. Lucas was flagged in math with a standard deviation above 12, which she could not explain. She said most of her students "sucked" in math.

9. Janice Mencey (Counselor)

Janice Mencey was the school counselor in 2009. She assisted testing coordinator Tammy Miller with the test materials. Mencey denied cheating or knowledge of cheating; however, she admitted that even if she had information about cheating she might not disclose it to us. She stated that if she told anyone, it would most likely be the principal.

C. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Melvin McClain (Teacher)

Melvin McClain stated that the majority of his students performed at high levels and that their success was due to his "teaching to the test" methodology and emphasis on the CRCT coach book. He stated that everywhere he has worked, the administration placed him in grades that needed the most work to raise test scores. McClain took pride in calling himself "the disciplinarian of the school." McClain could provide no explanation for his high wrong to right erasures.

2. Wanda Williams (Teacher)

Wanda Williams was a sixth grade teacher at UCA. She was flagged in all three subject areas. She stated that if anyone claimed she provided answers to students, they were lying. Williams did not believe that any student would be angry enough to accuse her of cheating. She claimed that she did not have the ability to answer some of the math problems on the test. She denied that her doors were locked during the test. Williams erased stray marks but denies changing answers.

3. Wanda Nevett (Teacher)

Wanda Nevett was one of two first grade teachers at UCA and had over 30 years of teaching experience. She and the other teacher, Torri Brown, split the first grade students into high and low performing groups, and Wanda Nevett taught the lower achieving students. At her first interview, Nevett claimed that the high erasures might have been the result of her “body language.” Her students knew her so well that they knew what she was trying to say without her having to say anything. Nevett believed the erasures took place in her classroom and that the tests were not tampered with after leaving her classroom. She denied erasing anything on the students’ tests, including stray marks. Nevett was unsure how many times she was allowed to read the questions and admitted she probably read them more than twice.

At her second interview, Nevett claimed she read some questions substituting language familiar to her students. When advised that she was seen walking around making erasures on students’ tests, she denied erasing answers but claimed she was erasing stray marks. She admitted she lied at her first interview, claiming she was scared. Nevett testified that the only thing she did that may have influenced the students’ answers was changing the language when she read some questions, and hitting a student’s desk and saying “pay attention!” Nevett denies pointing to answers on the test.

D. Other Evidence

Haron Wood believed that teachers at UCA provided assistance to students during test administration as a result of pressure placed by Principal Jim Harris. Principal Harris told the staff that the school must make AYP “by any means necessary.” Wood believed that several teachers helped their students cheat.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

We conclude that cheating occurred at UCA in 2008 and 2009.

We conclude that Christine Clyde, Haron Wood, Melvin McClain, Wanda Williams, and Wanda Nevitt cheated on the CRCT.

Principal Harris exerted pressure to make AYP. We conclude that Principal Harris either knew or should have known that cheating occurred. He created an atmosphere where teachers felt it was necessary to cheat.

Principal Jim Harris failed in his responsibility for testing activities and for ensuring the ethical administration of, and proper security for, the 2009 CRCT. It is clear from the statistical data, and the other evidence with regard to cheating in the APS system, that Harris failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT, adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and he is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

WILLIAMS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

CLOSED

Principal: Mary Joyce Harris
Testing Coordinator: Teresa Ayers

SRT-4 Executive Director: Tamara Cotman

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Williams Elementary had six flagged teachers in 2009, and closed at the end of the 2008-2009 school year. Each of those flagged teachers administered the test to seven or fewer students. Given the small sample size of each flagged classroom, and the fact that it is closed, we did not interview anyone at this school.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	20.4	N/A
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	11	N/A
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	6(3)	N/A
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	6.9	N/A
High Flagged Standard Deviation	11.8	N/A
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.5	N/A

III. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

We have no opinion on whether there was cheating at Williams, but do not believe it warrants any further investigation.

HERNDON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

350 Temple Street
Atlanta, Georgia 30314

Principal: Betty Tinsley
Testing Coordinator: Patrice Lisbon

SRT-1 Executive Director: Dr. Sharon Davis-Williams

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

There is limited statistical evidence that cheating occurred on the CRCT at Herndon Elementary in 2009. Fourteen people were interviewed at this school.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	20.4	1.9
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	11	1
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	5(3)	1(0)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	5	3.7
High Flagged Standard Deviation	7.3	3.7
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.1	3.7

III. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

For the 2009 CRCT at Herndon, 20.4% of the classes exceeded three standard deviations from the state mean for wrong-to-right erasures. Eleven classes exceeded three standard deviations. Seven of these classes were first and second grade classes. In 2010 the percentages of classes with wrong-to-right erasures exceeding three standard deviations from the state mean dropped significantly from 20.4% to 1.9%. Although we have concerns, the evidence does not warrant further action.

We note that the report made by Dr. Jackie Boyce in 2009, regarding a student saying a teacher at Herndon helped the students with answers, was not properly investigated by APS at the time. The evidence with regard to that matter was stale by the time of this investigation.

BOLTON ACADEMY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

2268 Adams Drive, NW
Atlanta, Georgia 30318

Principal: Laura Strickling
Testing Coordinator: Pamela Patterson

SRT-4 Executive Director: Tamara Cotman

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

There is only limited statistical evidence that cheating occurred on the 2009 CRCT at Bolton Academy Elementary, and this evidence lacks sufficient detail upon which to base further action. Ten teachers were interviewed at this school.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	15.9	4.5
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	11	3
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	5(4)	1(1)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	5.9	3.6
High Flagged Standard Deviation	9.7	4.0
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.0	3.0

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Ameera Lucky (Teacher)

Ameera Lucky witnessed teachers erasing stray marks as a group in the conference room in 2009.

Lucky also stated that Principal Strickling routinely backdated materials such as evaluations, observations, and receipt of documents. Some teachers reported this to SRT-4 Director Tamara Cotman, but Cotman took no action. After the teachers reported this conduct to Cotman, Principal Strickling sent a memorandum ordering teachers to send correspondence to Cotman through Principal Strickling.

Teachers at Bolton were told that if GBI agents came to their homes, they were to tell the agents they could only interview them through Principal Strickling.

2. Tabitha Stroud (Teacher)

Tabitha Stroud believes voice inflection was used to prompt first and second grade students on the CRCT.

Principal Strickling asked Stroud to backdate documents on more than one occasion. Stroud heard other teachers complain that Principal Strickling put false information in their

personnel files. All of this was reported to SRT Executive Director Cotman, but Cotman never responded to the teachers' concerns. Principal Strickling e-mailed the teachers and instructed them not to correspond with Cotman anymore.

3. Pamela Patterson (Testing Coordinator)

Pamela Patterson denied cheating or knowledge of cheating, and denied she erased any stray marks in 2009. Patterson is aware of teachers complaining that the previous year's CRCT score of a particular student did not match up with their abilities. Patterson implied that generally this was because the teacher did not feel he or she could prepare the student as well. On one occasion a teacher brought this concern to her and she concurred that the student's score was surprising.

4. Kristi Tompkins (Teacher)

Kristi Tompkins heard that Theresa Powell gave answers to her students on the 2008 CRCT. Tompkins heard Powell was "dealt with" by APS but does not know any further details.

B. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Laura Strickling (Principal)

Laura Strickling denied knowledge of cheating.

2. Theresa Powell (Teacher)

Theresa Powell was suspended for thirty days for improperly prompting students on the 2008 CRCT. She said that she told the students to "check their answers and make sure they are correct." She recognized this was a testing violation and submitted to the suspension.

According to Powell, she was surprised to see that she was flagged. She had specifically requested and been given a proctor for the 2009 CRCT. She says she would not have had an opportunity to cheat. If anyone erased answers it must have been the teacher who administered the test to her ESOL students with accommodations or the administration.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

Although we have concerns, especially regarding the possible attempts by Principal Strickling to interfere with this investigation, the evidence we observed does not warrant further action.

MORNINGSIDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

1053 East Rock Springs Road
Atlanta, Georgia 30306

Principal: Rebecca Pruitt
Testing Coordinator: Kori Sanchez

SRT-3 Executive Director: Dr. Gloria Patterson

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

There is only limited statistical evidence that cheating occurred on the CRCT at Morningside Elementary in 2009. Five people were interviewed at this school, some more than once.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	3.2	4.9
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	4	5
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	4(0)	5(0)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	3.9	3.8
High Flagged Standard Deviation	4.8	4.3
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.2	3.4

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Narrative

In 2009, four teachers were flagged for having wrong-to-right erasures higher than the State mean. During the course of this investigation, allegations were made that Elizabeth Richman told a teacher at Springdale Park Elementary that teachers at Morningside instructed their students to leave questions blank when they did not know the answers, allowing the teachers to fill in the correct answers later. Elizabeth Richman denied making that statement, and denied any knowledge of cheating on the CRCT.

One teacher testified that although teachers were required to turn their CRCT materials in immediately after testing, “no one checked on teachers to make sure their tests were turned in immediately.”

B. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Elizabeth Richman (Teacher)

Elizabeth Richman denied telling anyone that teachers at Morningside instructed students to leave answers blank and filling the answers in later. She stated that she had no knowledge of cheating on the CRCT, but that teachers were not “checked on” to make sure they turned in their CRCT materials immediately after testing.

2. Rebecca Pruitt (Principal)

Rebecca Pruitt denied any knowledge of cheating on the 2009 CRCT.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

For the 2009 CRCT at Morningside, 3.2% of the classes exceeded three standard deviations from the state mean for wrong-to-right erasures. Four teachers had classes exceeding three standard deviations. Two of these classes were first and second grade classes. In 2010 the percentages of classes with wrong-to-right erasures exceeding three standard deviations from the State mean grew from 3.2% to 4.9%, consisting of one classroom that tested one student. The evidence we observed does not warrant further action.

MORRIS BRANDON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

2741 Howell Mill Road Northwest
Atlanta, Georgia 30327

Principal: Karen Evans
Testing Coordinator: Peter Settelmayer

SRT-4 Executive Director: Tamara Cotman

I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

We found no evidence of cheating at Morris Brandon. Six people were interviewed at this school, some more than once.

II. STATISTICAL DATA

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	1	4.3
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	1	5
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	1(0)	4(1)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	5.8	3.4
High Flagged Standard Deviation	3.8	3.8
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.8	3.1

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

In 2009, Sarah Elizabeth Visel was the only teacher flagged for high wrong-to-right erasures. While Visel was the only homeroom teacher identified by the state, she did not administer the CRCT in 2009. She was out on maternity leave. The test was actually administered by Omema Martin and proctored by Judith Maisonneuve. Both Martin and Maisonneuve denied any knowledge of cheating. We conclude that there was no cheating at Morris Brandon given the low standard deviations for both 2009 and 2010, the small number of classrooms flagged, coupled with the lack of other evidence.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

We conclude that there was not cheating at Morris Brandon on the 2009 CRCT. No further investigation is needed.

2009 VS. 2010

The GOSA erasure analysis performed on the 2010 CRCT provides additional proof of cheating in 2009 and other years. By the time the CRCT was administered in the spring of 2010, the GOSA 2009 erasure analysis had been made public and Governor Perdue ordered the district to investigate the flagged schools. Media attention was focused on the district, and the state sent representatives to some of the district schools to observe administration of the test.

Following the 2010 CRCT, GOSA commissioned another erasure analysis. That study revealed a dramatic drop in WTR erasures, and consequently, the overall percentage of classes flagged plummeted in virtually every school in the “moderate” and “severe” concern categories. For example, Parks Middle School, with the highest percentage of classes flagged in Georgia in 2009, dropped from 89.5% in 2009, to 4% in 2010. Gideons Elementary went from 88.4% to 25%; F.L. Stanton Elementary from 83.3% to 7.1%.

We presented the principals of these schools with the 2010 erasure analysis and asked for an explanation of the precipitous drops in flagged classes. Many claimed that some students were afraid to erase in 2010 because of the media coverage surrounding the erasure analysis. None of those principals offered proof that the students actually erased less. A few principals recalled an occasional

student or parent asking whether it was okay to erase. Most confirmed that teachers still encouraged students to erase when necessary.

The problem with the “students are afraid to erase” explanation is that it assumes that the students were erasing in the first place. It is possible that students’ reticence to erase may account for some drops in flagged classes in a few schools. It does not account for the 85 percentage point decrease at Parks, and the significant drops at schools where we have confirmed cheating occurred.

Cook Elementary and BEST Academy provide a distressing example of how the presence of state monitors (and not the students’ fears) resulted in fewer flagged classes. Cook Elementary had 40.7% of its classes flagged in 2009, and we found direct evidence of coordinated cheating by Principal LaPaul Shelton on the 2009 CRCT. In contrast, BEST Academy was “clear of concern” in 2009. In 2010, the district transferred LaPaul Shelton to BEST Academy to serve as principal. There were no state monitors at BEST because it had previously been “clear of concern.” Apparently, Shelton has engaged in the same improper practices at BEST that he did at Cook in 2009. The percentage of classes flagged at BEST increased from 3.9% in 2009 to 19.4% in 2010. At Cook, where state monitors supervised the CRCT administration in 2010, and Shelton was no longer the principal, the percentage of flagged classes fell to 5%. This shift between Cook and BEST shows that the percentage of flagged classes at Cook dropped not

because the students stopped erasing, but perhaps because Principal Shelton was removed.

ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

PERCENTAGE OF CLASSES WITH FLAGGED WTR'S

School	2009	2010
Parks Middle	89.5	4.0
Gideons Elementary	88.4	25.0
Peyton Forest	86.1	26.1
F L Stanton	83.3	7.1
Usher Elementary	78.4	13.3
Venetian Hill	75.4	1.5
Capitol View	70.8	19.0
Connally Elementary	70.5	9.9
Dunbar Elementary	68.6	22.2
Scott Elementary	68.0	1.4
Perkerson Elementary	66.7	7.0
Blalock Elementary	66.7	closed
Towns Elementary	63.6	12.1
Woodson Elementary	63.3	15.7
Whitefoord Elementary	59.3	13.3
D H Stanton Elementary	58.3	17.6
Boyd Elementary	56.1	15.7
West Manor Elementary	54.9	28.9
Turner Middle	54.0	9.3
Kennedy Middle	53.2	6.0
Fickett Elementary	51.4	9.3
Finch Elementary	48.0	10.3
Deerwood Academy	47.8	8.6
White Elementary	47.4	22.9
Hutchinson Elementary	47.0	1.6
Humphries Elementary	46.7	10.4
Benteen Elementary	43.1	0.0
Beecher Hills	42.6	2.4
East Lake Elementary	42.0	0.0
Cook Elementary	40.7	5.0
Fain Elementary	39.7	18.8
Thomasville H	39.1	7.2
Dobbs Elementary	33.3	6.9
Crim High School	33.3	0.0
Coan Middle School	31.4	3.3
Slater Elementary	30.3	5.2
Benjamin S Carson	30.0	
C W Hill Elementary	29.4	closed
Cascade Elementary	28.8	1.9
Heritage Academy	28.2	9.3
Adamsville Elementary	27.8	1.9

School	2009	2010
Cleveland Elementary	26.1	8.3
University Co	25.0	4.2
Harper Archer	24.1	0.7
M A Jones Elementary	23.1	7.8
Bethune Elementary	23.1	3.3
Miles Elementary	21.7	2.9
Toomer Elementary	21.4	0.0
Parkside Elementary	21.3	4.3
Williams Elementary	20.4	closed
Herndon Elementary	20.4	1.9
Grove Park Elementary	20.0	4.5
The Bridge	16.7	0.0
Bolton Academy	15.9	4.5
Imagine Wesle	13.7	3.2
Long Middle	12.4	13.9
Kimberly Elementary	11.7	7.9
Young Middle	11.4	3.9
Sylvan Hills	10.4	3.0
Garden Hills	9.7	6.9
Brown Middle	9.3	7.5
Continental C	9.1	12.3
Bunche Middle	7.5	2.8
Burgess Peter	7.1	0.0
King Middle	6.1	3.4
Charles R. Drew	5.1	1.0
Inman Middle	4.5	5.0
The Best Academy	3.9	19.4
Kipp West Elementary	3.9	7.8
Jackson Elementary	3.7	6.3
Coretta Scott	3.7	5.6
Morningside Elementary	3.2	4.9
Atlanta Charter	3.0	0.0
Hope Elementary	2.8	5.0
Price Middle	2.2	4.8
Smith Elementary	1.0	1.9
Brandon Elementary	1.0	4.3
Sutton Middle	0.9	1.9
Lin Elementary	0.0	0.0
Rivers Elementary	0.0	1.5
Centennial Pl	0.0	3.0
Neighborhood	0.0	2.2
APSCEP Partner	0.0	0.0
Hillside Cona	0.0	0.0

GLOSSARY

TERM	DEFINITION
APS	Atlanta Public Schools. An independent school system in the City of Atlanta, Fulton County, Georgia. Officially the “Atlanta Independent School System.”
AYP	Adequate Yearly Progress. Part of the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, AYP is a measure of year-to-year student achievement on statewide assessments. Schools, school districts, and states must demonstrate a certain level of performance on reading and/or language arts and mathematics assessments. Schools that do not “meet AYP” for two consecutive years in the same subject area are designated as schools in “Needs Improvement.”
Certified educator	Individuals trained in education who hold teaching, leadership, service, technical specialist, or permit certification issued by the PSC.
Classroom level data	CRCT erasure analysis data for specific teacher or homeroom, including the subject tested, number of students, total number of wrong to right erasures, and resulting standard deviation.
Confessed	Admitted to the truth of a charge or accusation.
Convocation	Annual celebration held by APS to recognize schools that have met at least 70 percent of its performance targets. All APS schools’ faculty are expected to attend.
CRCT	Criterion-Referenced Competency Test. A standardized test used by Georgia as the AYP assessment tool for elementary and middle schools. Tests grades 1-8 in reading, English/language arts, and math. In addition, grades 3-8 are tested in science and social studies.
ELA	English /language arts
Fifth (5 th) Amendment	The privilege against self-incrimination grounded in the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, providing that no person will be compelled to be a witness against himself. In a criminal case, if a defendant invokes the 5 th Amendment and refuses to testify, he may not be presumed guilty based on that refusal. However, in a civil case, if a witness invokes the 5 th Amendment and refuses to answer questions concerning whether he or she committed a particular act, “it creates an implied admission that a truthful answer would tend to prove that the witness had committed the act.” <i>Perez v. Atlanta Check Cashers, Inc.</i> , 302 Ga. App. 864, 870 (2010).
GOSA	Governor’s Office of Student Achievement. State agency which provides accountability for Georgia’s schools, pre-K through postsecondary levels. The intent is to improve student achievement and school completion in Georgia.
GTR ID#	Unique identification number assigned to each student.

IEP	Individualized Education Program. Free, appropriate, public special education services which students with certain disabilities or impairments are eligible to receive. An IEP is a written plan developed by a team of teachers, other qualified personnel, parents, guardians, and the student if appropriate.
Implicated	Shown to be also involved, usually in an incriminating manner.
LA	Language arts
MA	Mathematics
Makes the floor	At Convocation, schools that “make the floor” have met at least 70 percent of its targets. Those schools’ faculty members are seated in groups on the floor of the host venue, with the schools meeting the highest percentage of its targets seated closest to the stage. Schools that do not make the floor are seated in bleachers or other remote seating.
Meets, exceeds	Refers to a measurement, usually expressed as a percentage, of students who “met” or “exceeded” state standards in certain core curriculum subjects (math, reading, English/language arts, science, and social studies) as measured by the CRCT.
Monitors	Persons assigned to a school to observe test administration procedures; e.g. test distribution, test collection, storage of test materials. Observes testing sites to see that schedules are being followed, reports unusual activity.
OIR	APS Office of Internal Resolution/Employee Relations. Processes and investigates complaints and reports of employee wrongdoing and related employment matters.
Parapro/paraprofessional	A person who may have less than professional-level certification, who relates in role and function to a professional and does a portion of the professional’s job under the professional’s supervision, and whose decision-making authority is limited and regulated by the professional. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-204. Georgia paraprofessionals must be certified by the PSC.
PDP	Professional Development Plan. A plan developed and implemented to correct perceived deficiencies in performance of teachers and administrators, used to encourage and support improvement in specific areas.
PEC	Program for Exceptional Children. Program offering specialized, educational testing, evaluation and other services to eligible children with certain disabilities or impairments. Each eligible student must have an IEP.
Preponderance of the evidence	A standard of proof in civil cases. Evidence which is of greater weight or more convincing than the evidence which is offered in opposition to it; that is, evidence which as a whole shows that the fact sought to be proved is more probable than not.
Proctors	Persons assigned to monitor classrooms or other specific areas during testing; circulate to observe students and discourage misconduct; assist test examiner to maintain testing security; report unusual activity or irregularities.

Prompting	Assisting students during testing by use of verbal or nonverbal cues. Examples include voice inflection, pointing to answers, repetition or rephrasing of words or passages, physical cues, movements, sounds, or signals meant to suggest or convey the answer or encourage students to erase and change an answer.
PSC	Georgia Professional Standards Commission. A state agency created “to set and apply high standards for the preparation, certification, and continued licensing of Georgia public educators.” The PSC also handles the investigation and due process of cases referred for disciplinary action.
RD	Reading
RPA	APS’ Department of R esearch, P lanning and A ccountability. Among other functions, RPA manages and oversees all testing programs at APS.
Social promotion	The practice of promoting a student from one grade level to the next on the basis of age rather than academic achievement.
SRTs	School R eform T eams. APS is organized into four (4) geographically aligned areas comprised of elementary and middle schools, each headed by an executive director. The structure is meant to provide greater accountability and faster service to schools and parents.
Standard deviation	A measure of the variability or dispersion of a distribution of scores that represents the average difference between individual scores and the mean. The more the scores cluster around the mean, the smaller the standard deviation.
Student level data	CRCT erasure analysis data for each individual student for each subject tested (RD, ELA, MA) showing the total number of erasures made on that test, and the number of those erasures that changed from wrong to right.
Stray marks	Pencil markings made on answer sheets that are visible outside of the “bubble” or oval area where answer choices are to be marked.
Targets	An accountability program implemented by APS, consisting of specific performance goals set for each school at the beginning of the school year. The targets are based on quantifiable measures, primarily CRCT test scores, and also include factors such as student attendance, and enrollment in rigorous academic courses.
Testing accommodation	A change in a test administration that modifies how a student takes or responds to the assessment. Accommodations are designed to provide equity and serve to level the playing field for students with disabilities and English Language Learners.
Totality of the evidence	Finding or conclusion based on all of the circumstances of a particular case, rather than any one factor.
WTR	Wrong To Right = an incorrect answer choice is erased and changed to a correct answer choice on an answer sheet, as detected by erasure analysis using high speed optical scanners.

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QUESTIONS

Without question, cheating occurred in APS on the CRCT in 2009 and previous years. The erasure analysis is no longer a mere red flag, but is supported by confessions and other evidence of cheating in 78.6% of the elementary and middle schools we investigated. We now address the questions: Why did cheating occur at APS, and who knew about it?

WHY CHEATING OCCURRED

Three primary conditions led to widespread cheating on the 2009 CRCT:

- The targets set by the district were often unrealistic, especially given their cumulative effect over the years. Additionally, the administration put unreasonable pressure on teachers and principals to achieve targets;
- A culture of fear, intimidation and retaliation spread throughout the district; and,
- Dr. Hall and her administration emphasized test results and public praise to the exclusion of integrity and ethics.

TARGETS

The unreasonable pressure to meet annual “targets” was the primary motivation for teachers and administrators to cheat on the CRCT in 2009 and previous years. Virtually every teacher who confessed to cheating spoke of the inordinate stress the district placed on meeting targets and the dire consequences for failure. Dr. Hall articulated it as: “No exceptions. No excuses.” If principals did not meet targets within three years, she declared, they will be replaced and “I will find someone who will meet targets.” Dr. Hall replaced 90% of the principals

during her tenure. Principals told teachers that failure to improve CRCT scores would result in negative evaluations or job termination. The unambiguous message was to meet targets by any means necessary.

We do not express any opinion as to the merits of targets. However, targets were implemented by APS in such a way that teachers and administrators believed that they had to choose between cheating to meet targets or failing to meet targets and losing their jobs.

When Dr. Beverly Hall became superintendent in 1999, she implemented many new programs and educational strategies. Dr. Hall managed the district by relying heavily upon data, as opposed to being a hands-on leader. In this regard, she implemented the “target” program, which held teachers and principals responsible for student achievement. These targets were used to quantify expectations so that academic progress was measurable, based primarily on the prior years’ CRCT results.

The major difference between APS targets and AYP standards is that under the target system, a school is not only required to move students from the bottom to the middle (i.e., from the “not meets” standards to the “meets” standards category on the CRCT), but schools are also required to move students from the middle to the top (i.e., from “meets” standards to “exceeds” standards). In this way, a school must focus on improving achievement for both lower performing and higher performing students.

Targets are set annually by the APS administration and approved by the Board of Education. The administration, with assistance from an outside consultant, sets these targets for the district, every school and each grade. The administration notifies the schools of their targets in terms of a percentage. For example, one target at a school might be to increase the percentage of students “exceeding” standards in math by 3%, while at the same time reducing the number of students “not meeting” math standards by 2%. This allows each teacher in every classroom to know exactly how many students must “meet” or “exceed” the target objective.

Low-performing schools are required to improve by a greater margin each year than higher-performing schools. Thus, a higher burden is placed upon the lower-performing schools.

As schools achieve their targets, the next year, the targets increase. For example, if 60% of last year’s fourth grade students met expectations in math on the CRCT, then this year that target might increase to 63%. Targets are set based upon the previous year’s group of students. According to teachers and administrators, this element of targets, combined with the fact that the targets increase every year, makes them unreasonable. For instance, if last year’s fourth graders were mostly high-performing students, but the fourth grade class this year contains more low performers, the fourth grade targets are still set based on last year’s high performing students’ scores. Teachers and administrators we

interviewed consistently referred to this as “comparing apples to oranges” rather than “apples to apples.”

Schools that meet 70% of their targets receive bonuses for every employee, from bus drivers to the principal. These bonuses range from \$50 to \$2000 per person, depending on what percentage of the targets the school as a whole achieves. Dr. Hall stood to financially gain based on whether the district met targets. Over the years, she received tens of thousands of dollars based on the reported CRCT results.

Schools that meet targets will “make the floor” at Convocation, the district’s annual, system-wide celebration held at the Georgia Dome to recognize schools that make targets and improve CRCT scores. Attendance by all faculty and administrators is mandatory. Faculty at schools that hit targets sit “on the floor.” Those that do not make targets are relegated to sit in the uppermost sections of the Dome. Throughout this investigation, it became clear that for many in the district, especially principals, it was extremely important to “make the floor.”

On the other hand, if a school fails to meet targets, its principal and teachers are likely to be placed on a professional development plan (PDP) and receive negative performance evaluations. Some are terminated. Student achievement comprises 25% of principals’ evaluations, the single heaviest weighted item. Dr. Hall made it clear that if within three years a school does not meet targets, then she will replace the principal with someone who will. Principals put the same pressure

on teachers to meet targets by placing teachers on PDPs, publicly humiliating them, or threatening termination. The PDP is supposed to be a tool for helping teachers and principals improve areas of weakness. Instead, the PDP became a weapon to punish and threaten teachers for having low test scores. The message heard by teachers and principals was that the only way out of a PDP was to increase test scores.

We repeatedly heard from teachers, principals and Dr. Hall, that APS is a “data driven system.” Almost without exception, teachers and principals said that the single most important factor to this administration is “data.” They said that “data is the driver,” “data drives instruction,” and “the data controls everything.” We heard this system-wide mantra from virtually every witness.

Data can be properly used as a tool to assess academic progress. But data can also be used as an abusive and cruel weapon to embarrass and punish classroom teachers and principals or as a pretext to termination. After hundreds of interviews, it has become clear that Dr. Hall and her staff used data as a way to exert oppressive pressure to meet targets.

When principals, in groups of 10 to 12, met annually with Dr. Hall, each school’s scores were displayed on large colorful graphs framed and hung on the wall around her conference room. During the meeting, Dr. Hall would ask each principal, one by one, “are you going to meet targets this year?” No one dared tell her “no.”

Many principals humiliated teachers in front of their peers for failing to meet targets. For example, at Fain Elementary School, the principal forced a teacher to crawl under a table in a faculty meeting because that teacher's students' test scores were low. In other schools, principals told teachers that if they could not meet targets or AYP, they might be subject to disciplinary action or they should find another profession. Administrators used these types of tactics even though they knew, as they told us, that the targets set for the schools were unreasonable.

The monetary bonus for meeting targets provided little incentive to cheat. But fear of termination and public ridicule in faculty and principals meetings drove numerous educators to cross ethical lines. Further, because targets rose annually, teachers found it increasingly difficult to achieve them. After a few years of increases, teachers found the targets unattainable and resorted to cheating. Multiple years of test misconduct in the district compounded the level of cheating that was required annually to not only match the prior year's false scores but also to surpass them. The gap between where the students were academically and the targets they were trying to reach grew larger.

The cumulative effect of cheating over a decade on the CRCT made meeting targets more difficult with each passing year. To maintain the gains of the past years while achieving the target of the current year required more cheating than in prior years. Once cheating started it became a house of cards that collapsed upon itself.

APS is indeed a “data driven system,” and whether or not a school meets targets is the most important data of all. What has become clear through our investigation is that ultimately, the data, and meeting “targets” by whatever means necessary, became more important than true academic progress.

Pressure to meet targets and improve students’ CRCT scores was the single, most frequent explanation given by teachers for why they cheated. Most teachers, and many principals, described an oppressive environment at APS where the entire focus of the district had become achieving test scores rather than teaching children. Incremental, yearly progress by students was not enough unless the school met targets. Individual student progress was not as important as the school, as a whole, increasing its overall CRCT scores. In the end, meeting targets became more about the adults than the children.

CULTURE OF FEAR

Dr. Hall and her top staff created a culture of fear, intimidation and retaliation, which was usually enforced on principals and teachers by some of the SRT executive directors. Many witnesses said that after reporting cheating, or some other misconduct, they became the subject of an investigation and were disciplined.

This culture of fear, intimidation and retaliation has infested the district, allowing cheating—at all levels—to go unchecked for years. Those who dared to

report misconduct in the district were held in contempt and punished. For example:

Dr. Jackie Boyce

Dr. Boyce worked for six years as a learning technology specialist in SRT-1, which includes most of southwest Atlanta. He was assigned to monitor the administration of the 2009 CRCT at Perkerson Elementary School, as he had done for three previous years. Because of the small class sizes at this school, test monitors did not remain in one classroom, but moved around the school. Several times during the 2009 testing, Dr. Boyce says he observed teacher Lashaine Blake, and others, improperly pointing out answers to students.

Dr. Boyce reported his observations to the principal, Dr. Mable Johnson, on two occasions, but says she “blew [him] off.” Boyce also wrote notations about what he saw on the standardized test feedback form, the state-required document filled out at the end of each day’s testing. He gave the form directly to Dr. Sharon Davis-Williams, Executive Director of SRT-1. Dr. Davis-Williams did not ask Boyce any details about the teachers’ inappropriate conduct, nor did she tell him to report his observations to anyone else. Instead, Davis-Williams gave Boyce blank forms and directed him to fill them out again without the notations about teachers pointing out answers. She told Boyce that he could not write about what he saw on the forms because “they are subject to the open records act.” Davis-Williams kept both the original and “corrected” forms.

During that same testing period in 2009, Dr. Boyce also worked at Herndon Elementary. While Dr. Boyce was in the classroom of Yolanda Coleman, she stepped into the hallway to speak with Dr. Betty Tinsley, the principal. As he watched her class, Dr. Boyce spoke with the students and asked how they performed on the CRCT. Several of the students shouted out that the teacher, Ms. Coleman, had given them the answers. One child, who according to Boyce apparently wanted to protect the teacher, said, “no, she was just giving us examples” of test questions.

When Dr. Boyce told Ms. Coleman what her students said about the CRCT answers, she became angry and accused Dr. Boyce of coercing the students to say she cheated. Dr. Boyce also spoke to Principal Tinsley and explained to her what happened. She stated she would deal with it.

Dr. Boyce was summoned to meet the next day with his immediate supervisor, Dr. Tinsley, and SRT Executive Director Sharon Davis-Williams. Davis-Williams accused Boyce of coercing children to say a teacher cheated, and informed Boyce that she would be investigating him. Ultimately, Dr. Davis-Williams gave Boyce a reprimand to be placed in his personnel file. (Ex. 11). In this memorandum, the cheating allegations against the teacher were noted as “unfounded.” Boyce refused to sign the document because it was erroneous. He was sanctioned for reporting possible cheating, while the accused teacher was

cleared by the SRT executive director without a proper inquiry, and in violation of APS policies.

Jimmye Hawkins

On November 17, 2010, Ms. Jimmye Hawkins was serving as an interim principal at one of the “flagged” schools. Her immediate supervisor, Executive Director Tamara Cotman (SRT-4), held a principals’ meeting, ostensibly to discuss teaching practices. Ms. Cotman began this meeting with a lengthy diatribe, bashing the Governor and this investigation. Cotman discussed the “tricks” she expected the investigators would use and warned the principals of things they needed to watch for in the event they were interviewed. Cotman then handed out forms with the words “Go to Hell” printed at the top. Cotman directed each principal to write letters to anyone for whom the principals felt animosity, including the Governor and the special investigators. She asked for volunteers to “read aloud” their “Go to Hell” notes.

In December, APS received an anonymous complaint describing what occurred at this meeting. (Ex. 12). The district hired a local attorney to investigate this complaint. Ms. Hawkins was interviewed on January 25, 2011. Afterwards she wrote to Veleter Mazyck, APS General Counsel, expressing her fear of retaliation by SRT-4 Executive Director Cotman. Mazyck assured Hawkins that steps had been taken to protect her from retribution. (Ex. 13). However, within hours of Hawkins’ interview, Cotman appeared at her school for a “site visit,”

which culminated in a list of “concerns and recommendations.” Additional site visits followed, all resulting in a list of alleged problems at Ms. Hawkins’ school.

On February 11, 2011, Cotman demoted Hawkins from principal due to “poor performance,” and moved her back to her previous position. Ms. Hawkins immediately called Mazyck and informed her that Cotman retaliated against her for providing information regarding the November 17, 2010 meeting. Ultimately, Hawkins was reinstated to the principal’s position and Cotman was transferred out of SRT-4 pending further investigation, but not until the matter was reported in the local media.

Ms. Cotman spoke with us concerning this matter. She said that the November 17, 2010, meeting was an ordinary principals’ meeting and the “Go to Hell” memo was intended as a “stress relief tool.” Cotman says she routinely began principals’ meetings in this manner. Cotman claimed that at the time Ms. Hawkins was demoted, she did not know that Hawkins had been interviewed as part of that investigation. Cotman says she began the process to demote Ms. Hawkins back in October 2010, and had been accumulating the appropriate documentation to take that action. The “site visits” in January and February 2011, comprised the final steps in the removal process.

Other attendees at the November 17th meeting supported Ms. Hawkins’ version of the story. At the very least, the timing of Ms. Hawkins’ mid-school year

“removal” was highly suspicious, coming so soon after she provided information unfavorable to Ms. Cotman.

Michael Milstead

Michael Milstead was the principal at Harper Archer Middle School from 2006 until 2009. He noticed a discrepancy between students’ high CRCT scores in elementary school and their poor academic performance. Many of these students were several grade levels behind academically, and Milstead soon suspected that some of these students had inflated CRCT scores.

This achievement gap was such a problem that Mr. Milstead raised it in a May 2008 meeting and suggested that elementary and middle school principals should work together to resolve the problem. Executive Director Tamara Cotman later confronted Milstead about his comments. She told him that some of the principals were very upset about his statements with regard to the CRCT scores. Cotman berated Milstead for speaking out about these matters at the meeting.

(We have heard the same concerns from scores of teachers regarding students’ achievement not matching their high CRCT scores from prior years.)

After Cotman informed him that his services would no longer be needed in the district, Michael Milstead resigned.

Former High-Level Official

On January 15, 2010, an attorney for a former high-ranking district official sent a letter to Dr. Hall alleging that APS retaliated against this official when the

official objected to unethical conduct by Chief Human Resources Officer Millicent Few. Specifically, this letter asserted that Ms. Few improperly ordered the destruction of all versions of an investigative report done by attorney Penn Payne with regard to allegations of cheating during the administration of the summer 2008 CRCT at Deerwood Academy.

When the official objected to destroying these documents, this official believed he/she became the subject of a sham investigation based on a trumped-up complaint by a former employee whom APS had ordered the official to terminate. Although APS denied retaliating against this official, the district paid over \$30,000 to settle the claim and \$5,000 in attorney's fees. The charges in the letter are consistent with evidence we have obtained through other sources.

While we have not independently investigated these charges, the timing of this official's termination is highly suspect, and provides validity to her claims. Even more suspicious is that APS investigated the allegations made against the official by a former employee, but never investigated the allegations in the January 15, 2010 letter, that Millicent Few ordered the destruction of documents related to cheating.

Patrick Crawford

Patrick Crawford worked for APS from 1991 until June 30, 2010, when he was fired. He was a fixed assets accountant and one of his duties was to conduct

internal audits. He visited schools to perform spot checks for property that APS owned.

Prior to 2008, the threshold for reporting and tracking equipment was \$250, including computers regardless of value. In 2008, APS changed that threshold from \$250 to \$5,000. As a result, 129,000 pieces of equipment no longer had to be accounted for, most of which were computers and flat screen televisions.

On April 22, 2010, Mr. Crawford submitted a report detailing 24 million dollars in fixed assets that were missing. That report also explained that APS had increased its threshold for reporting and tracking equipment to \$5,000. On May 3, 2010, Dr. Hall acknowledged receiving Mr. Crawford's report but disagreed with his conclusion. Four days later, Mr. Crawford, and the other two co-authors of the report, were placed on administrative leave and ultimately terminated. Crawford was told that his position was eliminated due to "budget constraints." He believed these terminations were a result of the report he submitted.

Santhia Curtis

Ms. Santhia Curtis served as Deputy General Counsel for APS from 2007 until April 22, 2011, when she was dismissed. Ms. Curtis supervised some of the legal staff at APS and never received negative evaluations or disciplinary actions regarding her job performance. She has an excellent reputation in the legal community. However, in the months leading up to her termination, Ms. Curtis

engaged in two protected activities that she believes led General Counsel Veleter Mazyck, and others, to retaliate against her. (Ex. 14).

In October 2010, a member of the legal staff said that he had been discriminated against by the APS General Counsel. Ms. Curtis, as this employee's direct supervisor, reported these concerns to the Director of Human Resources. Because Ms. Mazyck was Ms. Curtis' immediate supervisor, Ms. Curtis also notified Mazyck of the complaint. Ms. Mazyck showed obvious displeasure and informed Ms. Curtis that it was inappropriate for her to have reported the allegations to the Director of Human Resources.

An investigation into the discrimination complaint was completed in late January or early February, 2011. Contrary to APS investigative policies, however, no written report was issued. The internal investigator was told to report his findings back to the district through an oral report only. The file was closed on the investigation on April 15, 2011. One week later, APS fired Ms. Curtis.

Veleter Mazyck met with us on May 18, 2011. During that interview, she stated that Ms. Curtis was terminated because APS was "eliminating the Deputy General Counsel position for budget considerations." However, Chuck Burbridge, APS' Chief Financial Officer, and the person with the greatest knowledge of the APS budget, said that he had "no idea" why Ms. Curtis had been terminated. He made no mention of budgetary concerns or her position having been eliminated.

TEACHERS

The events discussed above are not isolated. Throughout this investigation numerous teachers told us they raised concerns about cheating and other misconduct to their principal or SRT executive director only to end up disciplined or terminated.

In sum, a culture of fear, intimidation and retaliation permeated the APS system from the highest ranks down. Cheating was allowed to proliferate until, in the words of one former APS principal, “it became intertwined in Atlanta Public Schools . . . a part of what the culture is all about.”

ETHICS

Teachers and principals denied receiving any ethics training. Dr. Hall failed to balance the data-driven environment she created with an equal focus on the importance of integrity in achieving these goals. In fact, the opposite occurred. Teachers who conducted themselves ethically, but failed to achieve required results, were sanctioned. Those who reported unethical conduct often became a target of retaliation, intimidation and harassment. As a result of the APS failure to temper its drive for success with ethical guidelines, the message was: Get the scores up by any means necessary. In Dr. Hall’s words: “No exceptions and no excuses.”

EARLY WARNINGS

Sudden and dramatic test score gains across schools and grade levels should have alerted Dr. Hall and her administration to investigate the cause of these shifts. We interviewed numerous teachers, principals and upper-level administrators, including superintendents of other districts, who reviewed the CRCT test score gains in APS. They universally agreed that such large gains over a short period of time should have been red flag warnings to APS administrators. As Dr. John Fremer of Caveon Test Security recently stated: “an individual student can exceed beyond their wildest dreams in any given year, but when a whole group shifts its position dramatically, you have to worry.” (When Test Scores Seem Too Good to Believe, *USA Today*, Mar. 6, 2011).

As early as 2001, an AJC story questioned the gains posted by a number of APS schools in the 4th grade on the 2001 CRCT. (Ex. 15). The story reported that of the 68 APS elementary schools tested in 2001, almost half posted dramatic gains of 30 or more percentage points in one or more CRCT subjects at a grade level. Ten of those schools had gains of 40 or more percentage points. APS publicly defended the increases, attributing the sudden gains to improved teaching strategies and new instructional models. APS did not investigate whether cheating or other misconduct could have been the cause of these remarkable gains.

These types of dramatic increases continued in the district over the next decade. We reviewed the CRCT results from 2004 to 2010 for all schools

currently under investigation. We found incredible swings in student performance for these years in many schools. For example:

- From 2006-2007, the percentage of students “exceeding expectations” in English/language arts at Peyton Forest Elementary School climbed 51 percentage points, from 28% to 79%;
- From 2004-2005, F.L. Stanton Elementary School posted a 42 percentage point gain in the number of students “exceeding” standards in math;
- From 2005-2006, all grades at Parks Middle School posted a 30.84 percentage point increase in math;
- From 2004-2005, all grades at East Lake Elementary School posted a 20.78 percentage point increase in math, a 20.23 percentage point increase in English/language arts, a 16.82 percentage point increase in reading;
- From 2006-2007, Dunbar Elementary School posted a 20 percentage point gain in reading. By 2009, 88.26% were passing;
- From 2006-2007, C.W. Hill Elementary School posted a 16 percentage point increase in reading;
- From 2007-2008, Benteen Elementary School posted a 16 percentage point increase in reading;
- From 2005-2006, Parks Middle School increased the percentage of students “exceeding expectations” in math by 21 percentage points;
- From 2006-2007, Parks Middle School increased the number of students exceeding in English/language arts by 16 percentage points, followed by an additional gain of 19% the next year;
- From 2007-2008, Parks Middle School increased its percentage of students “exceeding expectations” in reading by 22 percentage points;
- From 2007-2008, East Lake Elementary School increased the percentage of children “exceeding expectations” in English/language arts by 22 percentage points and in reading by 26 percentage points.

The following year, East Lakes' percentage of students "exceeding expectations" in math increased again by 17.86 percentage points; and

- From 2007-2008, Benteen Elementary School increased its percentage of students "exceeding expectations" on the CRCT by 18 percentage points.

Throughout our investigation, numerous teachers, principals and former officials told us that gains such as these over a short period of time raised questions as to whether the test scores were genuine or achieved by cheating. Yet APS leadership never questioned or investigated these extraordinary increases to ensure that they were honestly achieved.

ALLEGATIONS OF COVER-UP

Dr. Hall and her senior cabinet received numerous reports of cheating. We found cheating allegations being made to top leadership in the district beginning as early as 2005, and continuing through this investigation. In many instances, those reports were ignored, superficially investigated, or hidden from view.

Parks Middle School

APS received three complaints of cheating and other improprieties concerning Parks Middle School and Principal Christopher Waller at the end of 2005 and the beginning of 2006. Dr. Hall personally received the first complaint on December 22, 2005 from the Atlanta Federation of Teachers, and forwarded this complaint to Dr. Augustine and Millicent Few. (Ex. 16).

On January 13, 2006, Dr. Hall received a second complaint which was an anonymous letter. (Ex. 17). This letter alleged that Christopher Waller was manipulating the Supplemental Education Services after-school tutoring program (SES), which provided free services to certain students, paid for with federal money. The letter also described attempts by Principal Waller to “[p]ersuade, intimidate and coerce teachers to cheat on the upcoming spring 2006 G.C.R.C.T.”

The third complaint letter alleged that Waller gave the eighth grade teachers a document entitled “Tips for Passing the 8th Grade Writing Test.” (Ex. 18). The eighth grade students were allegedly given the “tips” and told to focus on question number seven, which was similar to the official question on the writing test. Question number seven on the “tips” asked students to think of a “rule” they thought was unfair, while the actual test question asked the students to think of a “law” they thought was unfair. Teachers coached students to think about the question in terms of a “law,” the exact question they were asked to write about. According to the complaint, Waller told his staff that elementary schools were cheating and that unless teachers at Parks cheated the school would continue to look bad.

Investigation at Parks

Damaris Perryman-Garrett, the head of OIR from June 2000 through June 2007, supervised the investigation into Parks Middle School. She hired Reginal

Dukes to conduct an investigation of the complaints for APS.¹ Dukes conducted interviews at the beginning of 2006, and outlined his preliminary findings in a March memo. He wrote that the after-school tutorial program was being abused and the “[eighth] grade writing assessment may have been compromised after Waller persuaded, [or] coerced teachers to cheat on the test.” (Ex. 19). Perryman-Garrett told us she remembered receiving Dukes’ preliminary report, which confirmed some of the allegations made with regard to Mr. Waller. Despite the forewarning that cheating might occur, the district took no action to secure the upcoming CRCT testing environment with respect to the allegations made against Principal Christopher Waller.

On May 5, 2006, Dukes sent APS a second report that confirmed the allegations the district had received in January 2006. (Ex. 20).

Dukes found the following:

- Three eighth grade teachers saw and received the writing tips;
- Thirteen students he spoke to were aware of the tips and told Dukes they got them from their eighth grade language arts teachers;
- Most students said they were directed to practice responding to question number seven;
- Most students admitted that a very similar question was on the actual writing test; and,
- Some students said they received the tips before Christmas, while others said they received them a week before the test.

¹ Dukes is a former client of Balch & Bingham LLP.

Dukes found:

[W]e conclude that students were coached on the topics that were actually on the formal writing exam. The language arts teacher most mentioned in providing this information is no longer at the school. The investigation did not determine how he gained access to this information. We do also conclude that there is reason for concern about the securing of these tests before the exam at Parks Middle School.

Dukes made further findings that should have raised questions about Principal Christopher Waller and his conduct. Specifically, Dukes' investigation revealed that student attendance data and grades were manipulated, and that the after-school tutorial services were mismanaged and money was misallocated.

Meeting with Senior Leadership

Dukes met with top APS officials to discuss his findings on Parks Middle School, and he recalled that Dr. Hall, Ms. Few, Ms. Perryman-Garrett and Dr. Augustine were in attendance. Dr. Hall, Few and Augustine all denied attending any meeting with Dukes. Dukes was positive these individuals were there, but said that Dr. Augustine was "in and out" of the meeting. Dukes' billing records show that he attended a meeting at APS headquarters building on May 10, 2006, and lists Dr. Hall, Few and SRT Executive Director Michael Pitts as being there. (Ex. 21).

Ms. Perryman-Garrett remembered attending a meeting with Dukes regarding his Parks Middle School investigation. She specifically recalled Ms. Few being at this meeting and said that either Dr. Augustine or Michael Pitts, the SRT Executive Director over Parks Middle School, would have been there also.

Perryman-Garrett, who described Dr. Augustine to us as the “god-mother” of APS, said that everything had to be run past her. We have heard similar testimony about Augustine from several witnesses and according to Perryman-Garrett, it would have been likely for Augustine to have been at this meeting.

Perryman-Garrett did not recall Dr. Hall being at the meeting, but told us she would not question Dukes’ recollection of it. She described Dukes as “thorough and trustworthy” and she “assigned him the tough cases.”

Dukes said that during the meeting he handed a copy of his May 5, 2006 report to Dr. Hall, but she never opened the report and did not read a single page while he was there. He explained his findings about the mishandling of the after-school tutorial program and improper accounting for student attendance at Parks Middle School. Dukes said Dr. Hall had a “glazed over” look as he was discussing his report.

Dukes explained the cheating allegations and told the group that the only way the “tip sheet” could have been prepared was for someone to open a test booklet and see the specific subject about which the students were to write an essay. Christopher Waller was one of only two people with access to the test booklets.

Dr. Hall wanted to know if Dukes had “any direct proof” of cheating or whether anyone had confessed. He responded that there were no confessions, but that no one could explain where the writing tip came from. (Dr. Hall has stated

frequently that absent “any direct proof” she would not believe that cheating had occurred.) Dukes was instructed to continue his inquiry. He completed his investigation on June 30, 2006. (Ex. 22).

When we interviewed Dr. Hall, she denied attending a meeting with Dukes and said that once Christopher Waller arrived as principal, she only heard good things about Parks Middle School. Hall said she did not recall any concerns over how federal funds were being spent or allegations of cheating on the Eighth Grade Writing Test. Even if she was not at the meeting, Dr. Hall said she believes that her staff would have told her about the subjects discussed. Few and Augustine, who also denied being at the meeting, agreed that had they attended the meeting, they would have told Dr. Hall about the discussion.

Despite these denials, Ms. Perryman-Garrett told us that one result of the Dukes investigation was that the company that provided after-school tutorial services at Parks Middle School, in which Principal Christopher Waller had a financial interest, was no longer allowed to do business with the district. This is strong evidence that action was taken as a result of Dukes’ investigation and that APS was aware of what had happened at Parks. Dr. Kathy Augustine confirmed knowledge of the after-school program matter at Parks Middle School, and that a conflict actually existed and Waller was told to “stop.” However, this matter is not mentioned in the principal’s personnel file. Additionally, there is no evidence that

APS took any action with regard to the allegations of cheating and other misconduct of Principal Waller.

Retaliation by Waller

Dukes believed Principal Christopher Waller was attempting to determine the source of the complaints against him. Our investigation revealed that Tameka Butler Grant, a teacher at Parks Middle School, submitted the last two complaints against Waller. According to Ms. Grant, Christopher Waller told her that he was “going to get rid” of her. And at the end of the 2006 school year, he did. Grant was transferred to another school and ultimately terminated from the district.

Waller also “got rid” of Kelley Collins and Fabiola Aurelien. Like Grant, Collins and Aurelien gave Dukes information supporting the allegations against Waller. Later, Principal Waller flaunted his removal of certain employees from the school, stating in an article published by the Annie E. Casey Foundation:

If you have folks on the team who don’t think you can win, you are in trouble So we had to get some people off the bus first. Then, we had to get the right people on the bus.

(A copy of this article is attached to the Parks Middle School summary.)

Dramatic Gains at Parks

If the complaints of cheating on the 2006 Eighth Grade Writing Test were not enough to raise suspicions about cheating by Christopher Waller, beginning with the 2006 CRCT exam, Parks Middle School also had stunning increases in its scores on the CRCT. (Ex. 23).

- Comparing the 2005 and 2006 CRCT, the percentage of eighth graders passing reading increased 31 percentage points, climbing from 50% in 2005 to 81% in 2006.
- In one year, the percentage of eighth graders passing in English/language arts increased by 27 percentage points, climbing from 54% to 81%.
- In one year, the percentage of eighth graders passing in math increased by 62 percentage points, climbing from 24% to 86%.
- In one year, the percentage of eighth graders exceeding expectations in math increased by 45 percentage points, from 1% to 46%.

One year gains of 31, 27, 62 and 45 percentage points should have raised suspicions for district administrators. This is particularly true since the district had been explicitly warned that the security of the Eighth Grade Writing Test had been breached. Dr. Hall told us that she would be suspicious of gains of this magnitude if she had been aware of a prior testing security breach. Nonetheless, she took no action when she learned of the implausible gains at Parks. Instead, Dr. Hall held up Parks and Waller as shining examples of APS progress.

In an article published by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, a private charitable organization that supports Parks Middle School, Dr. Hall is quoted as saying:

When I can stand up in front of my principals and read the list of highest-performing schools in the district, a list that runs the gamut from schools in the highest income areas to schools in the lowest income areas, there are no excuses.

Dr. Hall even praised Waller's management style:

You have to find someone who is able to lead....That sounds vague, but they must be able to go in and, while not being a dictator, get people's attention and articulate a vision and mission in a way that people want to be on board with it....

The “progress” reported about Parks caused money to flow into Parks Middle School and to Waller’s pocket. Gail Hayes, the executive director of the Atlanta office of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, said that sometime after 2006, Waller threatened to leave Parks Middle School. The Annie E. Casey Foundation, with the knowledge of Dr. Hall and others, interceded and contributed \$10,000 to Waller, in addition to his salary. Ms. Hayes did not know about the Dukes investigation. Even though Ms. Hayes was on the Blue Ribbon Commission, she did not learn about the 2006 issues at Parks Middle School until our interview with her. Dr. Hall, and her administration, kept this information from the Foundation and Ms. Hayes.

In 2008, Parks was the only middle school in the district to make 100% of its targets. This resulted in Principal Christopher Waller’s collecting incentive payments, and additional payments went to members of the school staff. Dr. Hall lauded this “progress” to the Board of Education, noting that Parks Middle School was one of three schools receiving the district’s “highest honors.” Waller also received the Atlanta Family Award, resulting in several thousand dollars going to him personally. APS continued to tout Parks Middle School as an example of the success its reform models provided.

Dukes said that sometime in 2009, he was called by OIR Director Colinda Howard's assistant, YaQuanda Williams, asking for the reports on three different investigations he had completed because OIR could not locate the documents. In searching for his files, Dukes discovered that APS never paid him for the work he performed in 2006. Dukes took his copies of these reports to APS (including his Parks Middle School investigation) and requested a meeting with Howard with regard to his fee. The district paid Dukes in May 2009.

On May 23, 2011, we served a subpoena on the district for all records regarding Dukes' investigation. One day later, Chief Human Resources Officer Millicent Few asked her assistant Nicole Lawson (now Director of OIR) to "close out" the 2006 Parks Middle School investigation. Lawson drafted a "note to the file," which closed the investigation, without either Lawson or Few reading the Dukes report. (Ex. 24). Lawson's note made absolutely no sense whatsoever. This was one day after our subpoena, and five years after the district received Dukes' report.

In sum:

- Dr. Hall, Dr. Augustine and Ms. Few all received complaints about cheating at Parks in 2006;
- An investigation was started;
- The investigator, Reginal Dukes, wrote three reports of his findings, which confirmed the allegations;
- APS did nothing about Parks Middle School for three years;

- In 2009, these reports could not be found in the district;
- In 2009, Dukes resubmitted the reports, at the district's request; and
- In 2011, after receiving our subpoena, APS "closed" the file.

As a result of APS' failure to act on Dukes' report:

- Christopher Waller, Parks Middle School's principal, remained in charge;
- Waller removed those individuals he believed reported his improper conduct to APS officials;
- Waller collected money and accolades for himself and the district based on false test results; and
- Waller continued to orchestrate cheating on the CRCT test, at least until he was transferred to APS headquarters in 2009 as a result of the BRC report.

Deerwood Academy

In 2008, there were questions about 11 Deerwood Academy students' CRCT scores from the summer retest. Five schools sent students to Deerwood to retake the CRCT. When the scores were reported, the 11 Deerwood students' scores stood out as being statistically improbable. GOSA commissioned an erasure analysis, which revealed that those 11 students also had high WTR erasures. GOSA conducted its own preliminary investigation into the cause of the erasures, ultimately determining that the data collected overwhelmingly showed that someone changed the students' answers on the Fifth Grade Math Test at Deerwood. GOSA issued a preliminary report on this investigation in June 2009.

The district hired attorney Penn Payne to conduct an investigation. She concluded that no cheating had occurred at Deerwood Academy. However, APS had her make many changes to her report, which placed the district in a more favorable light. On July 2, 2009, while her investigation into the 2008 CRCT retest at Deerwood was still ongoing, Ms. Payne met with Dr. Kathy Augustine, Director of RPA Lester McKee, and Director of OIR Colinda Howard. There are differing accounts of the meeting. According to Ms. Payne, Dr. Augustine asked for this meeting in order to be briefed on the Deerwood matter. Kathy Augustine told us that Ms. Payne wanted to interview her, and at the end of the interview, she asked that Payne give her a brief overview of the Deerwood investigation. However, according to Ms. Payne, she neither asked to meet with Dr. Augustine, nor did she interview her at any time during the Deerwood investigation.

When Payne and Colinda Howard arrived at the meeting, Lester McKee was present. Payne gave them an overview of the status of the investigation. Mr. McKee and Dr. Augustine presented Payne with a draft letter to GOSA Executive Director Kathleen Mathers, for the purpose of reporting on the Deerwood matter to the State. This document falsely claimed that Payne's investigation had been completed, and that no evidence of cheating had been found.

Payne took a quick look at the draft and immediately told Dr. Augustine, McKee and Howard that the letter was not correct, as her investigation was not complete. Ms. Payne had not yet reached a conclusion as to what had transpired at

Deerwood. In fact, she was still attempting to interview key witnesses. Payne said that she would review the letter more closely that evening and then email her comments to both McKee and Augustine. Augustine gave Payne her private email address.

That evening, Payne carefully reviewed the letter and suggested changes, specifically noting the parts of the letter that incorrectly stated that her investigation was complete and that no cheating had been found. Payne then emailed the revised version of the letter to McKee and Augustine. (Ex. 25). Payne heard nothing further about the letter until later.

Unknown to Ms. Payne, on July 6, 2009, Dr. Hall signed the letter without Ms. Payne's suggested changes. (Ex. 26). It was not until a year later, in 2010, when Payne began preparing to testify at a PSC hearing related to Deerwood Academy, that she saw a copy of Dr. Hall's July 6, 2009, letter. Payne's response upon reading the letter: "Oh Shit." She realized that, in spite of her verbal and written warnings to McKee and Augustine that the investigation was not complete, they had allowed the false and misleading letter to be sent to Kathleen Mathers, executive director of GOSA.

Contrary to what Payne told both McKee and Augustine at the meeting, and in her later email, Hall's letter to GOSA claimed that, "the portion of that investigation focusing on the 'cheating charge' is completed and concludes that there is no evidence, no basis in fact, that someone actually altered students'

answers.” This was a false statement, and both McKee and Augustine knew it. It became crucial for Dr. Hall, and her top leadership, that Payne’s findings match the results that Dr. Hall had falsely reported in her letter to GOSA.

Payne did not submit her report to the district until nine days later on July 15, 2009. At the time Payne submitted this report, she believed it to be the “final” report. However, that evening, she received an email from Colinda Howard asking Payne to make specific revisions to the document. Payne made the revisions, as requested, and resubmitted the report. Again, Ms. Payne believed it to be her final report. But that was not the case.

School officials kept asking Ms. Payne for more changes and additions to the report. Ms. Payne revised her report at least three more times before APS ultimately accepted it as “final” on August 20, 2009.

Once Payne’s initial Deerwood Academy report of July 15, 2009 was submitted to APS General Counsel, Veleter Mazyck became more involved in the Deerwood matter, according to a confidential informant. The informant says that as Ms. Mazyck’s involvement increased, the involvement of OIR decreased, and Ms. Mazyck took control over the final report. The week that the Penn Payne report was finally released, Ms. Mazyck told our informant that she had “spent all weekend working on the Penn Payne report.”

The confidential informant, who worked closely with OIR and was in a position to know the events of that time, has provided information on a number of

matters which we have verified through other sources. This informant told us that once the final Deerwood report was accepted by APS, it was considerably “watered down” from Payne’s original version. Chief Human Resources Officer Millicent Few illegally ordered all other versions from Payne be destroyed, except for the final version, dated August 20, 2009.

We received several editions of Payne’s report from the district. However, many of the earlier versions were missing, which is consistent with what the informant told us. When we first interviewed Ms. Payne on February 22, 2011, she was subpoenaed to produce all of her records on the Deerwood investigation. But when interviewed again on June 10, 2011, she provided additional documents that she had discovered the day before on her computer. Among these records were other versions of her report and various communications with APS. These versions had not been produced to us by the district, even though we had requested (via subpoena) all such records.

We find that the information provided by our confidential informant is correct and that Chief Human Resources Officer Millicent Few illegally ordered the destruction of prior versions of Penn Payne’s report. We also believe that Dr. Augustine knowingly allowed Dr. Hall to sign a letter to GOSA regarding the Deerwood investigation that was false, with intent to mislead the state as to the status of that case. Moreover, the district’s repeated requests for revisions of

Payne's report were an interference with, and manipulation of, what was to be an independent investigation.

Alteration and Destruction of Documents

The Parks and Deerwood investigations were not the last time the district would try to hide, minimize or keep secret, evidence of cheating. According to a confidential informant in 2009, when the AJC requested OIR complaints related to testing misconduct, APS Chief Human Resources Officer Millicent Few instructed OIR personnel to destroy documents, while illegally withholding other records from production.

In the spring of 2009, an AJC reporter submitted an open records act request to APS for "all OIR complaints involving testing misconduct" in APS for the 06-07, 07-08, and 08-09 school years. (Ex. 27). These complaints were maintained on a computer log kept by OIR to indicate open investigations, including those regarding testing misconduct. OIR personnel reviewed that log to identify files that alleged testing misconduct and ordered that the responsive documents be retrieved. When OIR gathered the files, some of the documents listed on the log were missing.

Although OIR has its own director and staff, it is directly under the control of Millicent Few. When Ms. Few learned that certain OIR files were missing, she directed OIR personnel to create a separate list of files from the computer log, and

to omit those files that could not be found. The original log was directly responsive to the AJC's records request and was illegally withheld.

Ms. Few reviewed the various OIR files that had been assembled and according to an informant, decided not to produce a number of them. Ms. Few ordered that those files also be omitted from the incorrect list being prepared for production to the AJC. According to an informant, strong disagreement was voiced with Ms. Few regarding this matter and she was told: "We can't do that. Under the open records act this is not proper," and "this will not work." In spite of those concerns, Few issued her directive: "this is what I want and this is what you are going to do." Ms. Few illegally ordered the old case log destroyed. An OIR secretary prepared the revised list, which was provided to the AJC in response to the open records act request in May 2009. (Ex. 28).

When the AJC received the district's response, the reporter reviewed the files and found the list to be incomplete. The reporter knew certain complaints had been omitted from the APS list because of information she had obtained from other sources. The AJC raised questions with the district regarding the missing files and specifically asked that the records be provided. Production of the files took several months and the reporter began to raise more questions. By late August 2009, the reporter noted in an email communication to APS: "I am also growing more concerned that I have not received all testing misconduct complaints that should

have been provided under state law.” (Ex. 29). APS finally produced the files with the exception of several documents that allegedly could not be found.

During our investigation, Ms. Few denied altering or destroying documents, or ordering anyone to do so. However, we verified the information provided by the confidential informant through several sources. According to the informant, APS improperly withheld these documents because the files made the district “look bad” since APS “either did a poor job in investigating the matter or gave a very minimal sanction for the wrongdoing.”

Porter and Reeves Reports

In the fall of 2009, more allegations of cheating at some schools at APS emerged. *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* published an article that raised questions about extraordinary gains in CRCT scores at some APS schools. (Ex. 30). Specifically, the AJC hired a statistician to study third, fourth and fifth grade scores on reading, English/language arts and math. The article said ten schools in the district posted what the AJC determined to be improbable gains in certain grades and subject areas and suggested that cheating could be one explanation for the jumps in scores in these schools.

The results were reported by the AJC in terms of raw test scores, not percentages. Some of these questionable results included:

- In 2008, Peyton Forest’s third grade math results were among the lowest in the state. However, as fourth graders in 2009,

these same students had the fourth highest math scores, out of nearly 1,200 elementary schools statewide;

- In 2008, West Manor's fourth grade math scores ranked 830th. Yet in 2009, West Manor achieved the highest scores in the state. West Manor's fourth grade average math score increased 90 points, six times the average increase;
- In 2008, Toomer Elementary fourth grade students posted the highest English/language arts scores in the state, only to see their scores plummet by 58 points as fifth graders in 2009.

Several experts, including Walt Haney of Boston College, told the AJC that “[c]hanges of that magnitude are just extremely suspicious.” As for Toomer Elementary's drop in performance, Tom Haladyna, a professor emeritus at Arizona State University, said that researchers rarely see such a steep drop. According to experts in testing, precipitous drops in scores can be indicative of cheating on the prior year's test. Once again, the district defended the results and relied on alternative factors to explain them, including high student turnover rates, instructional practices and smaller class sizes.

In a public response to the AJC's article, Dr. Hall announced that she would be hiring two experts to look into these test scores—Dr. Douglas Reeves, an expert on instruction and education reform, and Dr. Andrew Porter, Dean of the Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania. In a district news release, Dr. Hall said that both Porter and Reeves were going to inform the district in separate reports whether the large gains or declines in student testing are the result

of “[f]actors not considered in recent news reports” and that both reports would be made public. (Ex. 31).

Dr. Douglas Reeves was expected to evaluate instructional practices and strategies in the twelve schools identified by the AJC and tell APS whether those practices could lead to the achievement reflected by the test results. Dr. Hall told us that she thought Reeves had observed classrooms to see if there was evidence of appropriate instructional practice. She also said she thought he worked in the district for about two weeks.

Reeves’ report clearly set out the limitations of his work, which are not consistent with what Dr. Hall told us. (Ex. 32). In actuality, Reeves spent only thirty to forty-five minutes in each school and did not observe any classroom instruction during his visit, completing his assessment in just two days. Dr. Reeves’ report, based only on interviews and no classroom observations, was positive for the district. He further said he would be surprised if scores did not increase based on these practices. APS publicized that report and posted it on the district’s website.

A second APS expert, Dr. Andrew Porter, conducted a statistical analysis using the same information as the AJC and produced results almost identical to the newspaper’s unfavorable analysis. Dr. Porter looked at the AJC’s statistical methodology to determine whether it was valid, and whether there were alternative explanations for the gains reported, other than cheating. He ultimately concluded

that while the results of his analysis did not prove cheating, they did “point to student achievement gains and losses that are highly unusual and for which cheating could be one explanation.” Porter presented no other explanation for the gains.

The initial draft of Porter’s report went to Dr. Hall on February 22, 2010. (Ex. 33). Superintendent Hall, Dr. Kathy Augustine and others had a teleconference with Porter in which they discussed his findings. Porter’s final report, dated May 11, 2010, was sent directly to Dr. Hall by email on May 18, 2010. (Ex. 34). His final report restated the conclusions he reached in his previous drafts. Dr. Hall acknowledged receipt of the email the next morning, and indicated that she would read the report and get back with Porter. She never got back to Porter, and Dr. Hall claimed she deleted this report from her computer.

Unlike the favorable Reeves’ report, and contrary to Dr. Hall’s stated intent, the district did not make Porter’s report available to the public. APS publicly used Reeves’ report as a defense to allegations of cheating, while Drs. Hall and Augustine claimed not to realize the limited scope of his review.

Hall and Augustine acknowledged that Dr. Reeves could not have conducted a true assessment of APS’ instructional practices in two days, without classroom observations and other more detailed work. Nevertheless, when Reeves’ report was received, APS released the report as support for the district’s test score gains, while making no public mention of the Porter report.

Media Request for Porter Report

On July 19, 2010, two months after Dr. Hall received the Porter report, the AJC sent an open records request to the district asking for “[t]he report compiled by Andrew Porter, Dean of the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education, concerning CRCT results.” (Ex. 35). Sharron Pitts contacted both Dr. Kathy Augustine and Dr. Hall regarding this request. Pitts was told by them that they did not have the report. (Ex. 36).

A district official responded to the AJC saying “[a] copy of the Porter report does not exist in the district.” (Ex. 37). Shortly thereafter, the district told the AJC that the requested information was in the possession of AEF: “[t]he Porter report is included in the Blue Ribbon Commission’s investigative materials, so it will not be released until the report is released on August 2nd.” The AJC did not challenge the APS response at that time, but the Porter report was not released or mentioned in the BRC findings.

On November 19, 2010, the AJC filed a complaint with the State Attorney General, regarding APS’ failure to provide Porter’s report pursuant to a records request. On December 6, 2010, the AJC sent another request asking APS to provide copies of all materials that the district had provided to us. (Ex. 38). Deputy Superintendent Kathy Augustine claimed that while searching for records responsive to the AJC’s December request—five months after the AJC asked for

Porter's report—she discovered an “unopened email in the archives” of her computer containing a copy of Porter's second draft. (Ex. 39).

After we met with Dr. Hall in May 2011, her lawyers wrote to provide clarification on the issues surrounding Porter's report. (Ex. 40). Her legal team attempted to separate Dr. Hall from the report and asserted that there was no legitimate basis upon which to conclude that she acted improperly.

To be clear, however, it was Dr. Hall who decided to use the services of Dr. Porter to evaluate the AJC's work, held him out as the expert, participated in a telephone conference regarding his study, proclaimed his report would be made public, received a copy of his report, deleted it from her computer, and allowed APS to falsely claim that a copy of the report was not in the district. There is sufficient evidence that both Hall and Augustine did not properly maintain this public document and illegally withheld its release.

APS REACTION TO GOSA

As with previous responses of APS to cheating allegations, the district's first reaction to the 2009 GOSA erasure analysis was to try and explain it away. The day after Kathleen Mathers, Executive Director of GOSA, met with Dr. Beverly Hall and other top APS officials regarding the GOSA erasure analysis, Governor Perdue called Dr. Hall. The Governor told Dr. Hall that he was comfortable with the GOSA analysis and that APS should not question the state study. He further said that “the time for data analysis [was] over and an investigation should begin.”

Dr. Hall agreed, but told Governor Perdue that APS already determined some classrooms were flagged based on disabled students' tests. But at the time Dr. Hall made this declaration, GOSA had not yet given Dr. Hall, or APS, the student-level information from which Hall could have drawn such a conclusion.

Following this meeting with GOSA, APS generated its own analysis, purportedly to help them better understand the GOSA erasure data. Dr. Kathy Augustine directed Dr. Cari Ryan, a senior research associate with the APS Research, Planning and Accountability unit (RPA), to analyze the GOSA statistics. Dr. Ryan worked with Dr. Augustine and Lester McKee to create a chart that compared the 2008 CRCT scores to the 2009 scores. (Ex. 41).

The APS assessment, as reflected in its chart, was not an analysis of the GOSA data, but an effort to disprove cheating. In contrast to the grade and teacher-specific erasure analysis, the APS chart reflected the "average" number of erasures above ten on each section of the test across an entire school. It then compared this information with 2008 and 2009 CRCT results to show that scores in many schools did not increase as a result of the erasures. Dr. Hall, Dr. Augustine, Jeffrey Schiller (an outside consultant), and others told us that they believed this chart showed cheating was not widespread. However, they acknowledged to us that if there was cheating in 2008, then the APS analysis meant nothing.

Shortly after Governor Perdue ordered APS to conduct an investigation, Dr. Hall called a meeting with the principals of the flagged schools and presented APS's internal chart. Remarkably, Dr. Hall and Dr. Augustine never showed the principals the teacher-specific GOSA erasure analysis. Instead, they offered their own interpretation of GOSA's data. In fact, no principal or SRT Executive Director we interviewed had seen GOSA's erasure analysis until we showed it to them.

When we questioned Dr. Hall and Dr. Augustine about their failure to share the GOSA erasure analysis, they explained that because of the impending BRC investigation, they did not want to taint the investigation. Yet they had no concern about sharing the APS internal chart, which attempted to explain how the erasures were not the result of cheating.

BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION

As a result of the erasure analysis, Governor Sonny Perdue ordered the 35 districts with flagged schools to conduct a qualitative investigation to determine the cause of such a high number of WTR erasures outside the expected norm. Thirty-three of the 35 districts performed adequate investigations, which met the Governor's mandate. APS did not.

On February 12, 2010, GOSA issued its investigative guidelines, requiring APS to investigate all schools with more than 10% of the classrooms flagged and report to GOSA by May 14, 2010. (Ex. 42). Within a day or two after the meeting

with GOSA, Dr. Hall determined an independent commission should conduct the investigation. The deadline was extended several times, and the report was submitted on August 2, 2010.

The first outside entity considered by the district to assist the Governor-ordered investigation was the American Institutes of Research (“AIR”). Dr. Gary Phillips is a research scientist with AIR. APS unsuccessfully tried to convince Phillips that the GOSA erasure analysis did not indicate that there was widespread cheating on the 2009 CRCT.

On February 28, 2010, Dr. Phillips met with Dr. Hall, Augustine, McKee, Schiller, APS Board Chair LaChandra Butler Burks, Bill McCargo of AEF and Renay Blumenthal of the Atlanta Metro Chamber. Several people who were in attendance at this meeting have told us that APS presented “chart after chart” focusing on demographic factors and test score changes over a few years. According to Ms. Blumenthal, Dr. Phillips challenged the APS data analysis, stating that it would be inaccurate to look at test score gains over a short period and learn anything. Mr. McCargo described the APS presentation as denying there was widespread cheating. After the meeting, Dr. Hall told Dr. Phillips that testing strategies used by APS might also explain the high WTR erasures.

Dr. Phillips told Ms. Blumenthal that APS should audit the schools with “[t]he highest number of erasures . . . and show a real commitment to taking the

state's data seriously." Phillips also said APS has "a leadership issue, not a data issue." (Ex. 43).

On March 8, 2010, the Atlanta Board of Education established the BRC and selected its members. It was to be funded by the Atlanta Education Fund. Gary Price was asked to be chair. BRC members volunteered their time and served *pro bono*. Additionally, Board of Education Chair LaChandra Butler Burks, insisted that she serve on the panel, even though several members of the BRC believed this could compromise the public's perception of the independence of this body.

The BRC created a "working group" to run the investigation between meetings. Burks and Price were the only two members serving on the initial working group. Full time employees of AEF served as administrative support to the BRC. Renay Blumenthal of the Atlanta Metro Chamber provided assistance as needed.

The BRC hired Caveon Test Security to conduct a security analysis and perform further statistical study. The BRC hired accounting firm KPMG to conduct interviews at the 58 schools in APS that were flagged for high erasures.

Even though many of the classes in APS had standard deviations between 20 and 50, the BRC did not obtain any admissions of wrongdoing during its investigation. Ultimately, the BRC concluded that Atlanta's written testing practices and procedures indicated a "tight" testing environment, with some improvements needed. They further concluded that there was no evidence of

centrally-coordinated cheating, but that APS should further investigate a number of schools and certain educators and administrators.

TEST SECURITY

The BRC hired Caveon Test Security to perform a security audit on its test procedures, to review student answer sheets, and to provide a statistical assessment of GOSA's erasure analysis to help prioritize their investigation. Dr. John Fremer, President of Caveon, and Dennis Maynes, its chief statistician, both worked on the project and prioritized the schools based upon what they referred to as the "Caveon Index."

Both Maynes and Fremer said that the "Caveon Index" is different for each job based on what data is available to them. Caveon used different measures to look for where the probability of cheating was "the highest." Two of the measures Caveon used for this job were "abnormally high wrong-to-right erasures" and "abnormally high total erasures." According to Maynes, for its WTR erasures, Caveon set its probability calculation so it would only flag the worst five percent of the teachers. For total erasures, Caveon set its calculations to only flag those tests that had more than two times the median of total erasures. Before he calculated it, Maynes expected this would flag approximately twenty-five percent of the teachers in the fifty-eight schools.

Dennis Maynes said he used some of the GOSA erasure analysis data for his review but chose not to use the state-wide averages and deviations. He only

examined WTR erasures in the 58 flagged schools in the district. By reducing his statistical universe to this highly suspect and limited set of schools, Caveon redefined the criteria against which a school or teacher would be flagged.

Maynes admitted that confining his statistical model to this small set of highly suspect schools meant his statistical universe was “contaminated.” Caveon believed this was appropriate, however, because their overall methodology was to focus on finding “the worst of the worst.” Mr. Maynes further said that there was an enormous amount of erasures in the 58 APS schools and that there was no doubt that cheating was occurring in APS.

Because of the manner by which Caveon calculated its index, and the contaminated statistical universe it used, many schools for which there was strong statistical evidence of cheating were not flagged by Caveon. Nonetheless, the twelve worst schools identified by the BRC are the same schools GOSA identified as having the highest percentage of flagged classrooms in APS.

KPMG AND APS INTERVIEWS

The BRC hired accounting firm KPMG to handle the BRC investigative efforts. Remarkably, APS never provided GOSA’s erasure analysis to the BRC or KPMG. Therefore, KPMG did not use this information to question teachers during their interview process. In fact, not one teacher, principal or executive director ever saw the GOSA erasure analysis until confronted by us. Dr. Hall’s Chief of Staff, Sharron Pitts, said that when she saw KPMG’s proposed list of questions,

she found them to be superficial and not likely to get relevant information. Therefore, she said, it is not surprising that no one confessed.

KPMG found evidence of a pervasive fear of retaliation for reporting wrongdoing and pressure to meet targets. KPMG interviewers told us that a teacher's fear of retaliation was a recurring theme. They summarized this information in a presentation given to the BRC. They wrote:

During the interview process, a common theme emerged that may indicate potential cultural issues to be considered. Investigators noticed frequent expressions of concern including but not limited to the following:

- Fear of job loss in the event of reporting violations and/or not meeting target goals;
- Inability to trust administrators or central office;
- Being unduly pressured to meet test score requirements.

(Ex. 44). Chuck Riepenhoff, who supervised this work for KPMG, said this information was discussed during BRC executive sessions.

BRC Chair Gary Price told us that APS did not have adequate controls to “keep people from crossing ethical lines.” In his view, APS did not have things in place, such as policies and procedures, to ensure ethical conduct. They are “[a]ll about perform, perform, perform . . . they just don’t have that culture. They were not in balance.” He was disappointed when Dr. Hall proclaimed that the BRC report “vindicated” APS. Price went on to say that the BRC report did not vindicate Dr. Hall.

John Rice, an executive with the General Electric Company who also sat on the BRC, agreed with Price's sentiment. He felt that APS had "lost its balance between performance and ethics." He said there was no release valve for the performance pressure in the system.

The BRC submitted its report to the Atlanta Board of Education on August 2, 2010. Governor Perdue found the BRC investigation into APS to be insufficient in scope and depth. But the BRC was never likely to uncover the truth because the scale of the problem in APS was too deep, given the limited resources available and the time restrictions on the BRC's work. While Caveon's statistical analysis helped prioritize the BRC's efforts, its analysis was flawed and understated the potential for cheating in many schools. In the end, the problem was much larger than anyone on the BRC could have imagined.

APS RESPONSE TO BRC REPORT

The BRC sent 108 certified educators' names to APS for additional investigation. It also referred the principals at the 12 worst schools to the district because it believed the extent of the circumstantial or statistical evidence was sufficient to conclude at least a failure of leadership. The BRC believed there was sufficient evidence of cheating in several other schools outside of these twelve. The report was presented to the Board of Education on August 2, 2010. Following the release of the BRC report, Dr. Hall proclaimed it as "vindication" of APS and proof that no system-wide cheating occurred. Dr. Hall issued a news release the

same day, trusting that “[t]he media and public will focus on the main findings of the report that there is no orchestrated cheating in Atlanta Public Schools....” (Ex. 45). Dr. Hall quoted the BRC language regarding “no district-wide effort to manipulate” the 2009 CRCT again, and concluded by stating that “[i]f we are guilty of anything, we are guilty of demanding high standards of our students, teachers and principals.” Dr. Hall denied all responsibility for the cheating the BRC believed existed, but she promised to “ferret out” those responsible and impose severe consequences if necessary.

As to the 12 schools in which the BRC suspected cheating occurred, APS transferred those 12 principals to other positions within APS pending further investigation. Even though the BRC referred numerous educators back to APS for additional investigation, Dr. Hall announced just four days later, that she would refer these people to the PSC instead, without additional inquiry by the district. (Ex. 46). Many of those teachers had never even been interviewed by the BRC, much less investigated by APS.

Although Deputy General Counsel Santhia Curtis and her staff reviewed the BRC report for evidence that would support these complaints, in large part, the sole basis for the complaints filed by APS against the teachers was “high Caveon index”—the statistical index used by Caveon to identify potential irregularities. No other explanation was provided. According to Kelly Henson, Executive

Director of the PSC, it could not take any action based on this inadequate information.

We reviewed each of the PSC complaints filed, many of which were supplemented the very day Governor Perdue appointed us as special investigators. The vast majority of the complaints say only that a teacher has a high "Caveon Index," although no one at APS with whom we have spoken knew what this meant. Dr. Augustine, Millicent Few and Veleter Mazyck each acknowledged to us that even if a teacher has high statistical evidence showing cheating in his or her classroom, it does not mean that that teacher did anything wrong. Regardless, Dr. Hall decided to refer these employees to the PSC, issuing a news release publicizing her actions.

As to the teachers referenced in the BRC report, Dr. Hall made accusations against them when it was obvious there was insufficient supporting evidence. Ms. Mazyck, Ms. Pitts and Ms. Few acknowledged that "PR" [public relations] was a factor in the decision. This was done to promote Dr. Hall's public image so she would appear to be taking the allegations of misconduct seriously. These complaints made against 108 people without further investigation by APS as recommended by the BRC, and without sufficient cause to believe they had acted improperly, are unconscionable.

THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Dr. Hall had the support of community leaders after becoming superintendent. She courted philanthropic and business leaders rather than spend her days in the schools, working in the “trenches” and speaking one-on-one with teachers to know what was happening in her district.

In many ways, the community was duped by Dr. Hall. While the district had rampant cheating, community leaders were unaware of the misconduct in the district. She abused the trust they placed in her. Hall became a subject of adoration and made herself the focus rather than the children. Her image became more important than reality.

What began as a minor cheating scandal at Deerwood Academy, led to an investigation by a then-obscure state agency, headed by a former elementary school teacher. This was the first CRCT cheating by APS uncovered by a governmental agency, the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement. Questions began about Dr. Hall’s leadership.

When the 2009 results were published, they were startling. Governor Perdue ordered an erasure analysis. There were concerns that the high scores were the result of cheating.

Many of Dr. Hall’s supporters defended her and the district. The possibility of a negative reflection on the Atlanta “brand” caused some to protect Dr. Hall and attack the messengers. Image was more important than the truth.

An email we obtained illustrates this belief. The email, from Senior Vice President of the Metro Atlanta Chamber, Renay Blumenthal, stated that the BRC final report is to be “finessed” past the Governor. (Ex. 47). This effort was unsuccessful.

Somewhere in this process, the truth got lost, and so did the children.

FINDINGS

We found cheating in 44 of the 56 schools we examined (78.6%). There were 38 principals of those 56 schools (67.9%) found to be responsible for, or directly involved in, cheating.

We determined that 178 teachers and principals in the Atlanta Public School System cheated. Of the 178, 82 confessed to this misconduct. Six principals refused to answer our questions, and pled the Fifth Amendment, which, under civil law is an implied admission of wrongdoing. These principals, and 32 more, either were involved with, or should have known that, there was test cheating in their schools.

We empathize with those educators who felt they were pressured to cheat, and commend those who were willing to tell us the truth regarding their misconduct. However, this report is not meant to excuse their ethical failings, or exonerate them from their wrongdoings.

The massive test score increases alone, on the CRCT beginning in 2001, were enough to trigger an inquiry by Dr. Hall or others to determine if the gains

were achieved legitimately. We interviewed experts in the education field, including teachers, principals and superintendents, who agreed that the incredible increases in the test scores, over a short period of time, should have drawn the attention of Dr. Hall and her cabinet.

The standard deviations with regard to the WTR erasure analysis on the 2009 CRCT were so high as to rule out any conclusion other than cheating. However, we stress that a high standard deviation does not always mean that a particular teacher cheated because we know that some teachers' tests were changed by others, without their knowledge. Additionally, during the 2009 CRCT and previous testing years, security protocols were regularly breached with reckless disregard for state-mandated procedures.

Amazingly, while APS was in denial, entities such as *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, recognized these gains as extraordinary and began raising questions as early as 2001. The AJC questioned test score gains in APS in 2006 and 2009. Never once did Dr. Hall, or other officials, investigate to confirm that these scores were legitimate. While others were questioning these gains, Dr. Hall staunchly denied that the scores were a result of cheating, attributing the gains to their educational initiatives and prowess. To make matters worse, the district then touted the principals at schools with the highest increase in scores, like Parks Middle School, as models of APS and the district's achievements.

Publicly, the district flatly rejected any suggestion of test misconduct, but internally, Dr. Hall and her administration received numerous reports of cheating at a number of schools. She ignored them, hid them, or attempted to explain them away. In 2006, an APS investigator concluded that cheating occurred on an Eighth Grade Writing Test at Parks Middle School. Dr. Hall took no action, despite evidence that the principal may have been involved in making students change test answers. Instead, she ordained the principal at Parks as the poster child for how a school can turn around. Ironically, when numerous principals and teachers were asked during this investigation if they believed cheating occurred in APS, they immediately pointed to Parks Middle School, and its principal.

In 2009, when the district received an open records request seeking all complaints of cheating, certain administrators illegally altered the complaint log (a public document) to minimize the number of complaints and hide files that would have cast APS in a negative light. Similarly, when an expert, hired by APS produced a report which suggested that cheating could be one explanation for large score gains, Dr. Hall deleted that report from her computer. It was never made public by the district.

Dr. Hall pledged “full cooperation” with this investigation, but did not deliver. The district’s responses to our subpoenas were slow and often incomplete. APS withheld documents and information from us. Many district officials we interviewed were not truthful.

On multiple occasions, APS administrators attempted to explain away evidence of cheating. On the summer 2008 CRCT retest at Deerwood Academy, they manipulated and softened the report of the purportedly “independent” investigator. Likewise, when GOSA produced the 2009 erasure analysis, APS tried to secrete that data, such that only the highest ranking district administrators saw it.

Rather than use the GOSA analysis to aid in its investigation (through the BRC), APS created its own internal study to explain how the high erasures were not the result of cheating. Dr. Hall never shared the GOSA erasure analysis with her executive directors, principals or teachers, instead showing them the APS internal analysis. She knew this information was not shared with the BRC and that they had only seen Caveon’s flawed analysis. BRC members never saw the very document that laid the foundation for its investigation.

APS became such a “data-driven” system, with unreasonable and excessive pressure to meet targets, that Dr. Hall and her senior cabinet lost sight of conducting tests with integrity. This immense pressure to meet targets placed on principals was imposed upon the classroom teachers. Meeting targets “by any means necessary” became more important than actual student achievement.

Dr. Hall and her cabinet knew or should have known that cheating was occurring on the CRCT. For years, they disregarded warning signs or failed to see them. If they failed to see the warnings, they were not the leaders they claimed to

be. And if they disregarded them, it was a gross and willful breach of their duty to the children of Atlanta.

As a result, school children were harmed by the failure to honestly measure their academic achievements, depriving them of the educational assistance they needed, and to which they were entitled.

Dr. Sharon Davis-Williams

Dr. Sharon Davis-Williams, Executive Director of SRT-1, failed in her responsibility for testing activities and for ensuring the ethical administration of, and proper security for, the 2009 CRCT. Williams failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT and adequately supervise testing activities and test security in SRT-1. This resulted in, and she is responsible for aiding and abetting Dr. Hall in falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the evaluation of students to the State Department of Education with regard to the results of the 2009 CRCT.

We conclude that Sharon Davis-Williams either knew or should have known cheating and other misconduct was occurring within schools in SRT-1.

Michael Pitts

Michael Pitts, Executive Director of SRT-2, failed in his responsibility for testing activities and for ensuring the ethical administration of, and proper security for, the 2009 CRCT in SRT-2. Pitts failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT, and adequately supervise testing activities and test security in SRT-2. This resulted in, and he is responsible for aiding and abetting Dr. Hall in falsifying,

misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the evaluation of students to the State Department of Education with regard to the results of the 2009 CRCT.

We conclude that Michael Pitts either knew or should have known cheating and other misconduct was occurring within schools in SRT-2.

More particularly, we conclude that Michael Pitts had knowledge of cheating at Parks Middle School and aided and abetted cheating at this school by:

- Failing to investigate allegations of cheating and reports that attendance records had been falsified;
- Discouraging teachers from making complaints against Principal Christopher Waller; and
- Advising teachers at Parks Middle School not to cooperate with this investigation.

Finally, when questioned about these allegations, Pitts provided false information to us.

Tamara Cotman

Tamara Cotman, Executive Director of SRT-4, failed in her responsibility for testing activities and for ensuring the ethical administration of, and proper security for, the 2009 CRCT in SRT-4. Cotman failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT, and adequately supervise testing activities and test security in SRT-4. This resulted in, and she is responsible for aiding and abetting Dr. Hall in falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the evaluation of students to the Georgia Department of Education with regard to the results of the 2009 CRCT.

We conclude that Tamara Cotman either knew or should have known cheating and other misconduct was occurring within schools in SRT-4.

Finally, when questioned about these matters and the “Go to Hell” meeting, she provided false information to us.

Veleter Mazyck

As General Counsel for APS, Ms. Mazyck’s conduct raised the following concerns.

She attempted to manipulate and influence the outcome of the investigation into potential cheating at Deerwood Academy in 2008.

When questioned about the Deerwood Academy investigation and other matters, she provided less than candid responses.

Millicent Few

Millicent Few, Chief Human Resources Officer, on two occasions ordered those under her supervision to illegally destroy and alter public documents in order to hide evidence related to test cheating and misconduct.

When asked about these matters, Ms. Few made false statements.

Dr. Kathy Augustine

Dr. Kathy Augustine, Deputy Superintendent for Instruction and Curriculum, failed in her responsibility for testing activities and for ensuring the ethical administration of and proper security for the CRCT in 2009, as well as in previous years. Dr. Augustine failed to properly monitor the CRCT in 2009 and in

previous years, and to adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and she is responsible for, aiding and abetting Dr. Hall in falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the evaluation of students to the State Department of Education with regard to the results of the 2009 CRCT in the APS system.

Dr. Augustine had a legal and ethical duty not to falsify, misrepresent, omit or erroneously report information submitted to governmental agencies. We conclude that Dr. Augustine violated this duty by intentionally causing a letter containing false information to be transmitted to the state. Specifically, Dr. Augustine caused and allowed a letter to be transmitted to the state indicating that the investigation into allegations of cheating at Deerwood Academy was complete and that no evidence of cheating had been found.

We conclude that Dr. Augustine either knew or should have known cheating and other misconduct was occurring in schools in the APS system.

Finally, when questioned about the Deerwood Academy investigation and other matters, she made false statements.

Dr. Beverly Hall

Dr. Beverly Hall, Superintendent of the Atlanta Public School System, was ultimately responsible for honestly and accurately reporting information to the State of Georgia regarding the evaluation of students. She certified to the Georgia Department of Education that the district “adhered to all written regulations and

procedures relating to testing and test administration including the distribution and collection of test materials, test security, use of these results and department testing dates and the reporting of irregularities” as required by the relevant guidelines and test manuals. It is our finding from the statistical data and other evidence, that Dr. Hall’s certification to the state was false.

Dr. Hall failed in her leadership of, and ultimate responsibility for, testing activities and for ensuring the ethical administration of the CRCT in 2009, as well as in previous years. This resulted in, and she is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the evaluation of students to the State Department of Education with regard to the results of the 2009 CRCT in the APS system.

Finally, we conclude that Dr. Hall either knew or should have known cheating and other misconduct was occurring in the APS system.

GLOSSARY

TERM	DEFINITION
APS	Atlanta Public Schools. An independent school system in the City of Atlanta, Fulton County, Georgia. Officially the “Atlanta Independent School System.”
AYP	Adequate Yearly Progress. Part of the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, AYP is a measure of year-to-year student achievement on statewide assessments. Schools, school districts, and states must demonstrate a certain level of performance on reading and/or language arts and mathematics assessments. Schools that do not “meet AYP” for two consecutive years in the same subject area are designated as schools in “Needs Improvement.”
Certified educator	Individuals trained in education who hold teaching, leadership, service, technical specialist, or permit certification issued by the PSC.
Classroom level data	CRCT erasure analysis data for specific teacher or homeroom, including the subject tested, number of students, total number of wrong to right erasures, and resulting standard deviation.
Confessed	Admitted to the truth of a charge or accusation.
Convocation	Annual celebration held by APS to recognize schools that have met at least 70 percent of its performance targets. All APS schools’ faculty are expected to attend.
CRCT	Criterion-Referenced Competency Test. A standardized test used by Georgia as the AYP assessment tool for elementary and middle schools. Tests grades 1-8 in reading, English/language arts, and math. In addition, grades 3-8 are tested in science and social studies.
ELA	English /language arts
Fifth (5 th) Amendment	The privilege against self-incrimination grounded in the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, providing that no person will be compelled to be a witness against himself. In a criminal case, if a defendant invokes the 5 th Amendment and refuses to testify, he may not be presumed guilty based on that refusal. However, in a civil case, if a witness invokes the 5 th Amendment and refuses to answer questions concerning whether he or she committed a particular act, “it creates an implied admission that a truthful answer would tend to prove that the witness had committed the act.” <i>Perez v. Atlanta Check Cashers, Inc.</i> , 302 Ga. App. 864, 870 (2010).
GOSA	Governor’s Office of Student Achievement. State agency which provides accountability for Georgia’s schools, pre-K through postsecondary levels. The intent is to improve student achievement and school completion in Georgia.
GTR ID#	Unique identification number assigned to each student.

IEP	Individualized Education Program. Free, appropriate, public special education services which students with certain disabilities or impairments are eligible to receive. An IEP is a written plan developed by a team of teachers, other qualified personnel, parents, guardians, and the student if appropriate.
Implicated	Shown to be also involved, usually in an incriminating manner.
LA	Language arts
MA	Mathematics
Makes the floor	At Convocation, schools that “make the floor” have met at least 70 percent of its targets. Those schools’ faculty members are seated in groups on the floor of the host venue, with the schools meeting the highest percentage of its targets seated closest to the stage. Schools that do not make the floor are seated in bleachers or other remote seating.
Meets, exceeds	Refers to a measurement, usually expressed as a percentage, of students who “met” or “exceeded” state standards in certain core curriculum subjects (math, reading, English/language arts, science, and social studies) as measured by the CRCT.
Monitors	Persons assigned to a school to observe test administration procedures; e.g. test distribution, test collection, storage of test materials. Observes testing sites to see that schedules are being followed, reports unusual activity.
OIR	APS Office of Internal Resolution/Employee Relations. Processes and investigates complaints and reports of employee wrongdoing and related employment matters.
Parapro/paraprofessional	A person who may have less than professional-level certification, who relates in role and function to a professional and does a portion of the professional’s job under the professional’s supervision, and whose decision-making authority is limited and regulated by the professional. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-204. Georgia paraprofessionals must be certified by the PSC.
PDP	Professional Development Plan. A plan developed and implemented to correct perceived deficiencies in performance of teachers and administrators, used to encourage and support improvement in specific areas.
PEC	Program for Exceptional Children. Program offering specialized, educational testing, evaluation and other services to eligible children with certain disabilities or impairments. Each eligible student must have an IEP.
Preponderance of the evidence	A standard of proof in civil cases. Evidence which is of greater weight or more convincing than the evidence which is offered in opposition to it; that is, evidence which as a whole shows that the fact sought to be proved is more probable than not.
Proctors	Persons assigned to monitor classrooms or other specific areas during testing; circulate to observe students and discourage misconduct; assist test examiner to maintain testing security; report unusual activity or irregularities.

Prompting	Assisting students during testing by use of verbal or nonverbal cues. Examples include voice inflection, pointing to answers, repetition or rephrasing of words or passages, physical cues, movements, sounds, or signals meant to suggest or convey the answer or encourage students to erase and change an answer.
PSC	Georgia Professional Standards Commission. A state agency created "to set and apply high standards for the preparation, certification, and continued licensing of Georgia public educators." The PSC also handles the investigation and due process of cases referred for disciplinary action.
RD	Reading
RPA	APS' Department of Research, Planning and Accountability. Among other functions, RPA manages and oversees all testing programs at APS.
Social promotion	The practice of promoting a student from one grade level to the next on the basis of age rather than academic achievement.
SRTs	School Reform Teams. APS is organized into four (4) geographically aligned areas comprised of elementary and middle schools, each headed by an executive director. The structure is meant to provide greater accountability and faster service to schools and parents.
Standard deviation	A measure of the variability or dispersion of a distribution of scores that represents the average difference between individual scores and the mean. The more the scores cluster around the mean, the smaller the standard deviation.
Student level data	CRCT erasure analysis data for each individual student for each subject tested (RD, ELA, MA) showing the total number of erasures made on that test, and the number of those erasures that changed from wrong to right.
Stray marks	Pencil markings made on answer sheets that are visible outside of the "bubble" or oval area where answer choices are to be marked.
Targets	An accountability program implemented by APS, consisting of specific performance goals set for each school at the beginning of the school year. The targets are based on quantifiable measures, primarily CRCT test scores, and also include factors such as student attendance, and enrollment in rigorous academic courses.
Testing accommodation	A change in a test administration that modifies how a student takes or responds to the assessment. Accommodations are designed to provide equity and serve to level the playing field for students with disabilities and English Language Learners.
Totality of the evidence	Finding or conclusion based on all of the circumstances of a particular case, rather than any one factor.
WTR	Wrong To Right = an incorrect answer choice is erased and changed to a correct answer choice on an answer sheet, as detected by erasure analysis using high speed optical scanners.